■ ENTERTAINMENT / A2-2

Sampaguita scion talks about life with movie stars

■ METRO / A25

Lifting of Metro number-coding scheme expected

■ ACROSS / A18

6 crime gang members killed in shootout with policemen in Bataan

■ SPORTS / A31

UCLA, Florida battle for US NCAA championship

South Koreans ready for life with robots

IPAPADALA KITA SA KOREA!
01

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—South Korea, the world's most wired country, is rushing to turn what sounds like science fiction into everyday life.

The government, which succeeded in getting broadband Internet into 72

SOUTH/ A23

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, April 3, 2006 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 116 P18 website: www.inq7.net

RP Catholic groups brace for 'Da Vinci' film attacks

By Christian V. Esguerra

PHILIPPINE CATHOLIC GROUPS ARE GEARING up for the expected assault on the Christian faith with the worldwide release next month of the Hollywood blockbuster based on Dan Brown's hugely popular "The Da Vinci Code" novel.

The Theological Centrum, a center disseminating key Church teachings on specific issues, will

RP CATHOLIC/ A6

Abalos tells critics of Cha-cha: Go to SC

DEATH ANNIVERSARY
Tourists look at a mural of Pope John Paul II, made up of small photographs of his face, in Krakow. Poland and the rest of the Catholic world commemorated the first anniversary of his death on Sunday. *(Story in The World, Page A28.)* AP

Senate to file suit to stop verification

By Leila B. Salaverria and TJ Burgonio

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. yesterday challenged groups opposed to the verification of millions of signatures in support of a shift to a parliamentary form of government to get an injunction from the Supreme Court if they believed that the verification process violated the high tribunal's earlier ruling.

"Let us stop arguing. They should go to the Supreme Court and stop us," Abalos said in a phone interview yesterday.

Senators will respond to Abalos's challenge.

"We are preparing for that. This matter will ultimately reach the Supreme Court," Senate President Franklin Drilon said.

The Supreme Court ruled in 1997 that the Initiative and Referendum Act was not enough to cover a people's initiative to effect Charter change (Cha-cha).

Abalos said nobody was seeking to formally stop the poll body although certain people claimed that the Comelec's verification of the signatures violated the high tribunal's decision.

"I'm not saying they're incorrect. I have a lot of respect for these people and we may just have different interpretations of the decision," Abalos said. "If you believe you are right, then you should go to the Supreme Court and get an injunction."

Sigaw ng Bayan, a coalition of 100 civic and nongovernment organizations, and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap) have been gathering signatures as part of a "people's initiative," one of the three modes for amending the 1987 Constitution.

The other modes are a constituent assembly (Con-Ass) consisting of the members of Congress and a constitutional convention (Con-con) whose delegates are elected.

In a people's initiative, a petition for an amendment requires the signatures of at least 12 percent of the total number of registered vot-

ABALOS/ A22

STANDING tall is starlet Keanna Reeves, who appears on stage as she is declared winner of the Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition. RUDY ESPERAS

Starlet wins reality TV show amid vote-buy raps

By Nini Valera
Entertainment

SEXY STARLET KEANNA REEVES RULES IN "Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition."

Reeves, 36, received 571,607 text votes or 44.2 percent of the total number of votes, making her the big winner in the top-rating reality show aired over ABS-CBN.

Besting 13 other celebrity housemates and bagging P4 million worth of cash and prizes, Reeves—Janet Derecho Duterte in real life—was proclaimed the big winner Saturday night during a live telecast of PBB Celebrity Edition from the Manila Post Office at Liwasang Bonifacio.

John Prats came in second with 372,198 votes or 28.8 percent of total votes. Bianca Gonzales garnered 245,594 votes or 19 percent, putting her in third place.

Zanjoe Marudo was in fourth place with 103,422 or 8 percent of the votes.

The overwhelming number of votes could be attributed to massive vote card-buying.

Talent manager and television talk show host Boy Abunda admitted that he had bought vote cards for his contract artists—Reeves and Gonzales.

According to a source from Gabriela, about 10 percent of Reeves's votes had come from the left-leaning women's party-list group.

Earlier, rumors circulated that the clothing line Bench had been buying votes for Prats and Marudo, who endorse the brand.

"I won't deny it," Abunda told the INQUIRER on Saturday. "My friends and I bought vote cards to support Bianca and Keanna. There's no rule against that."

STARLET/ A9

Firms seek rules on new power scheme

By Abigail L. Ho
Business

A GROUP OF LARGE POWER USERS YESTERDAY welcomed the news of Manila Electric Co.'s declaration of partial open access, but withheld its decision on whether to stick with Meralco or find other power suppliers until after the rules for the new scheme shall have been finalized.

Meralco has agreed to allow other power producers to supply the electricity needs of its large customers, ending its monopoly in Metro Manila and nearby cities and provinces. The move is perceived as something that would reduce the electricity bills of large power users.

Donald Dee, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that companies would need to know how much Meralco would charge for the use of its lines in case the companies decided to source their power requirement from other firms.

"We welcome the news, but we need to know the details. While we can access (National Power Corp. or other independent power producers), we don't know what the tolling fees will be. At the end of the day, we

FIRMS/ A22

'Maximo' bags another int'l film award

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Entertainment

THE FILIPINO DIGITAL MOVIE, UFO PICtures' "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros," garnered top awards and a cash prize of P6.2 million at the 7th Las Palmas de la Gran Canarias Film Festival held in the Canary Islands on April 1.

The cash prize will be awarded to the film's distributor in Spain.

The movie beat Oscar and Golden Globe contenders "Junebug" and "The Squid and the Whale" from the United States, as well as "Bride of Silence" from Vietnam, "Gilaneh" from Iran, "Dam Street" from China and "Invisible Waves" from Thailand, among other films.

"Maximo" director Auraeus Solito relayed the good news to the INQUIRER through a text message from Madrid, Spain. The Canary Islands lies southwest of Spain on the Atlantic Ocean.

MAXIMO/ A8

Opposition boycott puts pressure on Thaksin

THAKSIN has promised to step down if his party gets less than 50 percent of the vote. AP

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S EMBATTLED prime minister urged the country to ignore an opposition boycott of snap elections yesterday, saying the vote was crucial to ending the country's deepening political stalemate.

The balloting was largely peaceful, but bombs exploded after voting ended at three polling stations in the restive south, injuring four soldiers and a police officer, police said.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra called the election three years early to reassert his mandate after weeks of persistent street protests calling for his resignation. But the vote was unlikely to satisfy critics who accuse him of corruption and abuse of power.

All three opposition parties in Parliament boycotted the election, urging Thailand's 45 million registered voters to cast ballots but

OPPOSITION/ A8

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening. SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/04/02/06

Palparan gives NPA 5 more months

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

MEXICO, PAMPANGA—CONTROVERSIAL MAJ. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. has set Sept. 21 this year—his 56th birthday—as the deadline for wiping out the communist insurgency no administration has succeeded in licking for nearly four decades.

Sept. 21, in roughly five months from now, coincides with the day of Palparan's retirement from the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

In the Visayas, the military is also stepping up its campaign to defeat the New People's Army by offering soldiers a reward of P20,000 for every NPA section leader captured dead or alive.

Palparan, chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division based in Nueva Ecija, said he could have set the deadline earlier than Sept. 21 had not the anticommunist campaign been slowed by the efforts to destabilize the administration.

"If I were allowed my way, this could have been done at a faster pace," he said in Filipino. "It is slowed down by propaganda versus the government and the military. The militants are even using priests and bishops to discredit us."

Palparan said his retirement would not stop him from hunting down rebels.

"I will retire, yes, but I will not retire from my counterinsurgency work. I will just be removing my military uniform," he told the INQUIRER.

Palparan, described by militant groups as the "butcher" of political activists, attended a two-day seminar for some 600 former communist supporters in this town.

Asked why he would continue pursuing rebels even after his retirement, he said: "This is a lifetime commitment for democracy... I will do it until I'm dead."

Palparan said more than 200 villages in the Central Luzon provinces of Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales were under "various degrees of influence" of rebels and their legal fronts.

"I don't care if there are five or 10 barangays. I want to clear them all. I want to clear the towns completely," he said.

When the INQUIRER pointed out that at least 70 unarmed leftist activists had been killed in the region in the wake of a stepped-up military campaign, Palparan said: "That's not my or the military's [fault]... It's happening all over the country [because] ... the enemies of the state have earned their own enemies."

Central Command chief Lt. Gen. Samuel Bagasin announced the P20,000 bounty on Friday when he spoke before soldiers of the 43rd Infantry Battalion based in Sogod, Southern Leyte.

"We now [have] the upper hand. Let us continue our decisive engagement against the enemy because they are losing steam," he said. *With Jani Arnaiz, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Cha-cha is not the Answer
Let Us Consult the People

Never in our history has our nation been so divided.

Yet, there is a plan to shift from presidential to a parliamentary form of government. This is NOT the solution to our problems.

Yes, change must happen but it must come from our political leaders and our electoral system.

That is why we make this appeal. To President GMA and to Congress.

We appeal to them:
Exercise the highest degree of statesmanship on charter change or cha-cha.

On the part of business, we believe this should be its role:

1. The business sector must remain apolitical, non-partisan, and must play a proactive role in explaining to the people what the shift from presidential to parliamentary means for them. Or why the present system must remain.
2. The business sector will act as a Convenor and invite resource persons from both sides, for and against, and discuss cha-cha.
3. The business sector will organize regional business forums in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao in tandem with regional chambers and business organizations to determine the pulse of the people. The results of these consultations will be made public.

The COPW will file a petition to the Supreme Court

For its part, the Consumer and Oil Price Watch (COPW) will file a petition to the Supreme Court questioning the legality of the People's Initiative. In a previous ruling, the Supreme Court declared Republic Act 6735 (on the People's Initiative) was defective and insufficient as basis for a grassroots campaign to amend the Constitution. Thus, Congress must first pass an enabling law for a popular initiative.

Barangay assemblies nationwide claimed to have gathered 4.5 million signatures supporting a shift from the presidential to parliamentary form of government. At least 5 million signatures are needed. The groups of Raul Lambino of Sigaw ng Bayan & Bohol Governor Erico Aumentado, president of the League of Provinces & the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines, will gather not just 5 million but 10 million signatures.

We would like to know how 10 million signatures could be produced in just six days.

The 2007 elections must be held.

The National Elections in May 2007 must push through as provided for by the Constitution.

Whether it's a unicameral parliamentary or the current bicameral, elections must be held for the 12 Senators, 238 Representatives, and around 17,000 local posts in cities, municipalities, and provinces whose term of office will expire in 2007.

Furthermore, the President must fill up the three vacancies in the COMELEC for commissioners. We must ensure that we have an independent and credible COMELEC, free from pressure of any kind, political or otherwise.

Electoral reforms must be in place now. Only when our people are convinced that the 2007 elections are clean, honest, and free from anomaly will they respect the results.

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Miriam: Get a degree first

NURTURING POLITICAL ambition? Get a college degree first.

Administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago wants candidates who do not have a four-year college degree barred from running for any elective position.

Santiago said she would propose a provision in the amended Constitution that would require all candidates for elective office to earn at least a four-year college degree.

"If even policemen are required to be college graduates, the same requirement should be imposed on all national and local candidates," she said in a statement.

If the Supreme Court allows Charter change, Santiago said she would propose a constitutional provision to raise the standards for elected officials to improve public service.

The senator, a former regional trial court judge and law professor, said officials lacking college degrees should be required to take a seminar on governance at the University of the Philippines.

"After which they should take a test on a pass-fail basis," she said.

Santiago, who took a leave from the Senate last week due to a heart condition, harped on this subject when she spoke at the commencement exercises of the Western Visayas Institute of Science and Technology Iloilo City, her hometown, on Saturday, and the Western Colleges in Naic, Cavite, on Friday.

"I never cancel a speaking engagement, no matter how sick I am. Besides, I feel very strongly about this issue," she said.

Santiago maintained that she was still opposed to moves to amend the 1987 Constitution through a constituent assembly or a people's initiative.

She and her colleagues in the Senate expect cases to be filed in the Supreme Court challenging these parallel moves of the administration to introduce constitutional changes.

TJ Burgonio

Filipino's dreams died in Bahrain

By Melvin Gascon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BATACAN

DUPAX DEL SUR, NUEVA VIZCAYA—FOR Edwin Batacan, family mattered most.

Working a world away for a construction firm in Bahrain, he looked forward to the day in June this year when his wife and their only son would be joining him there.

The dream ended at dawn Friday (Philippine time) when Batacan, 47, along with 56 other people drowned when their leisure boat sank off the coast of Bahrain on the Persian Gulf.

Bahrain was investigating Saturday how a boat packed with partying foreigners capsized in calm seas. Officials said the vessel was not licensed for such trips.

Sixty-eight people survived. Batacan was among at least three Filipinos who drowned, the Department of Foreign Affairs said. Bahrain officials listed five Filipinos dead.

Batacan's death left his wife Lourdes, 43, and son, Edric Bartram, 12, grieving in the family house here.

Batacan, a geodetic engineer, had worked as a surveyor at the twin towers of the World Trade Center Bahrain, which was nearing completion.

"[That boat trip] was supposed to be a celebration because they had just finished a very important phase of the project. Instead, it turned into a tragedy," Lourdes told the INQUIRER.

Lourdes said her last talk with her husband was on Thursday when he "sought [her] permission" to join the cruise.

"We were teasing each other. I jokingly warned him about the girls that might be at that outing, but he kept telling me not to worry because I was the only woman he loved," Lourdes said.

Lourdes learned about her husband's death even before DFA officials relayed the sad news.

"I woke up unusually early that morning, turned on the TV to watch the news, which I was not used to doing," she said. "I scanned the channels until I ended up on BBC (British Broadcasting Corp.), which was broadcasting the news about a boat that sank off Bahrain."

"I felt something bad."

Lourdes called her sister, Ermelinda, who is also based in Bahrain.

"I asked her to check if my husband was in his apartment, but [she said] no one was there."

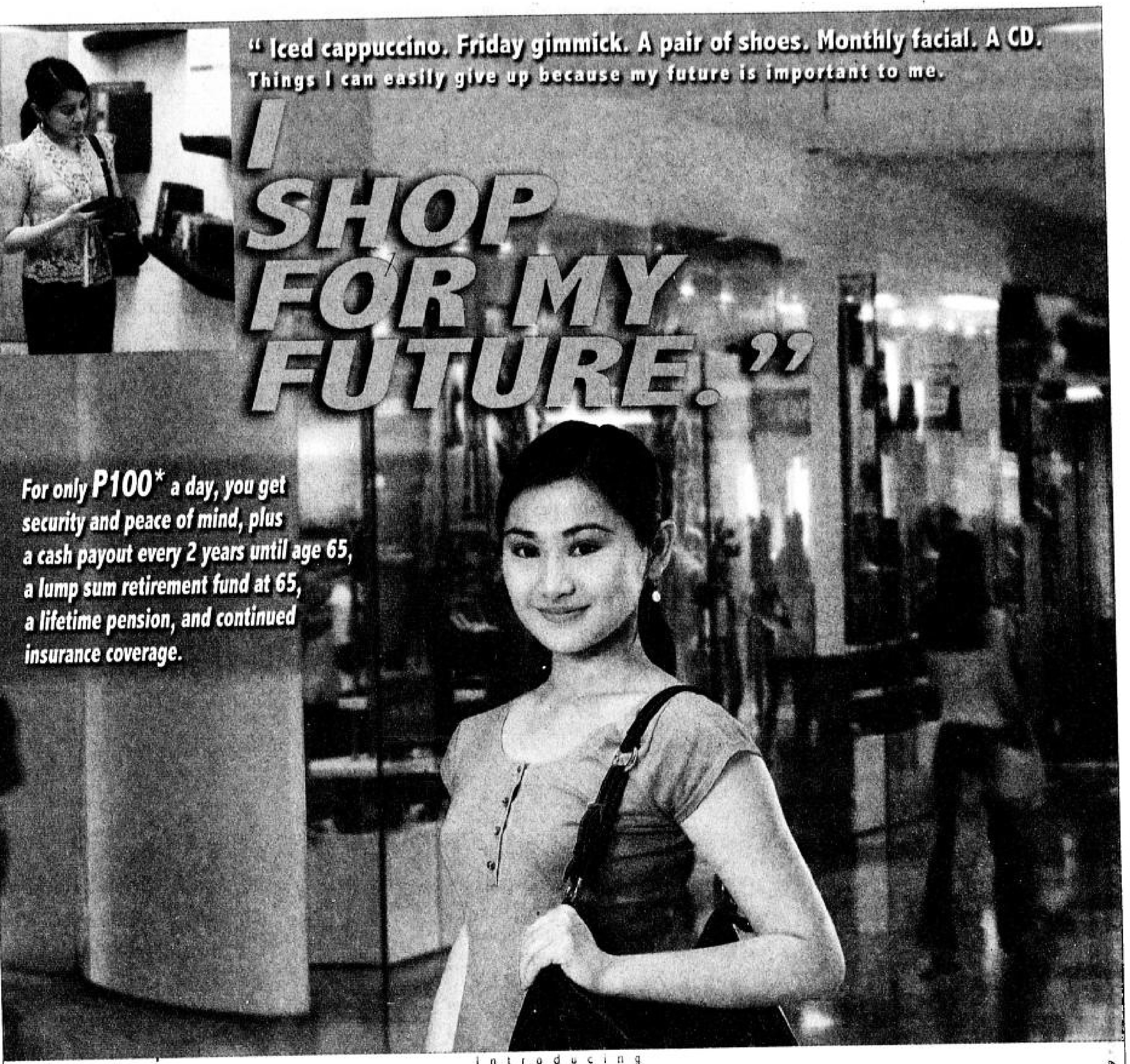
Soon after, her sister called to say a survivor had confirmed her husband was among the fatalities.

Home for vacation last December, Batacan told his wife to process their visas so they could join him in Bahrain in June.

"It was all that he wanted. Every time he called, he would always talk about how he yearned for that day when we could join him there," Lourdes said.

"He had good plans for his family. Now those dreams are all gone," she said.

With an AFP report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Workers implore Rosales

THE MILITANT LAbor group Kilusang Mayo Uno yesterday urged Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales to take a firm stand on issues concerning workers in the country.

"We appeal to the Cardinal to take a stand on issues regarding the need for an urgent wage increase, employment, social services vis-à-vis the growing corruption and rottenness within the ruling system," KMU spokesperson Presto Suyat said in a statement.

KMU chair Elmer Labog said that with Rosales' newly elevated stature in the Catholic Church, more people would look to him for hope.

Rosales was elevated to the College of Cardinals during a consistory at the Vatican last month. As a "Prince of the Church," he is an adviser to the Pope.

The KMU has been pushing for a P125 across-the-board wage increase, citing the increasing prices of basic commodities and utilities such as gas and electricity.

Leila B. Salaverria

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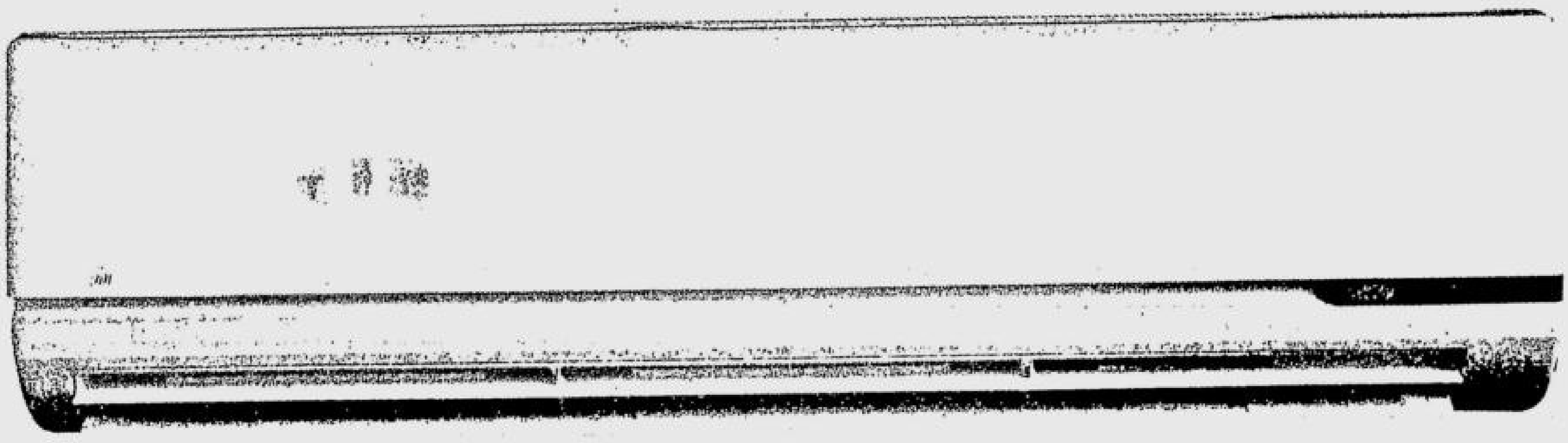

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, April 3, 2006
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Dn 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62 (or 13:14-62)

Gospel: John 8:1-11

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak Jesus appeared in the Temple again. All the people came to him, and he sat down and began to teach them.

Then the the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees brought in a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They made her stand in front of everyone. "Master," they said, "this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now the Law of Moses orders that such women be stoned to death; but you, what do you say?" They said this to test Jesus, in order to have some charge against him.

Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. And as they continued to ask him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who has no sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And he bent down again, writing on the ground.

As a result of these words, they went away, one by one, starting with the elders, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.

Then Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She replied, "No one." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go away and don't sin again."

Commentary

The old story of Susanna: Caught in a trap by those she refused to surrender to and yet is saved by the young prophet Daniel who tricks them with their own lies and they are meted out justice. Jesus finds himself in the same situation with the woman 'caught' in adultery (where is the man with her?). She is helpless and they intend to destroy her in their attempt to destroy Jesus. But he uses their words/deeds to trap them and to shame them into leaving and letting her live. The justice of God in Jesus is born of forgiveness, truth-telling and shared suffering, for he will be caught as she was caught. But none will come to his defense; he will lean on God alone. Who do we help? Or are we in need of shaming?

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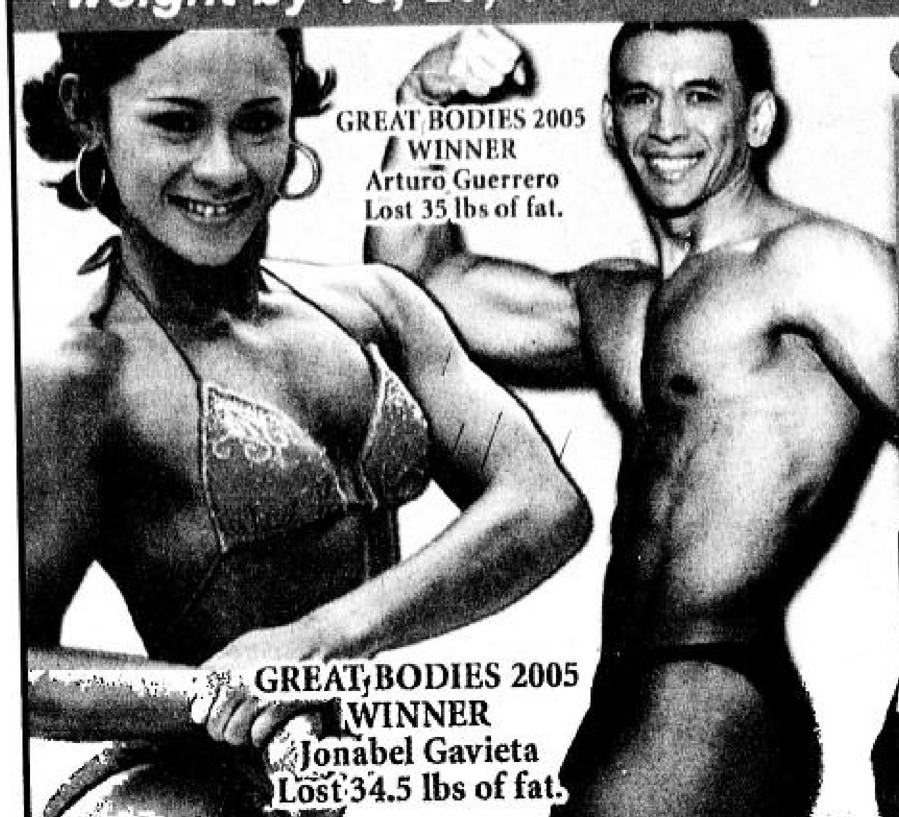

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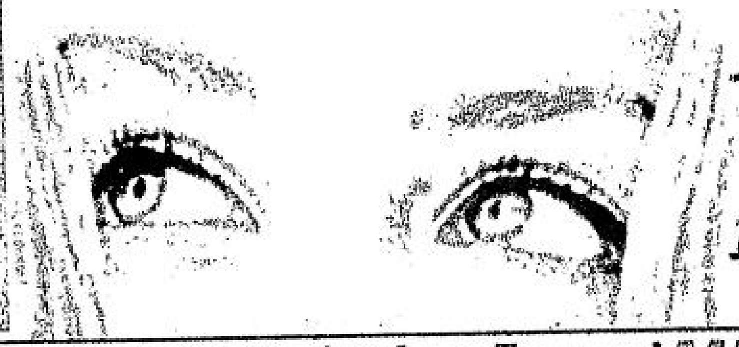
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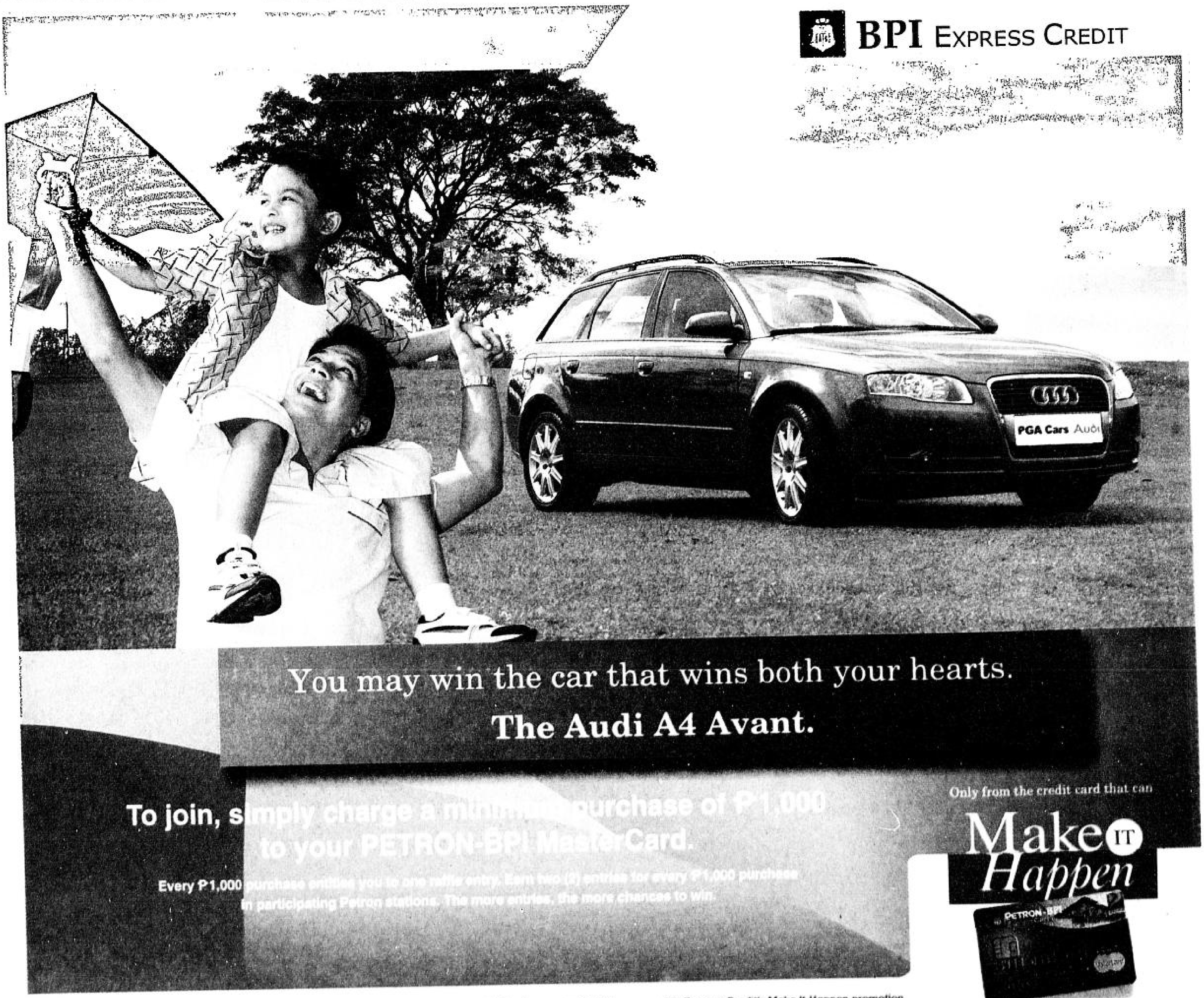

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RP Catholic groups brace for 'Da Vinci' film attacks

From page A1

devote the May issue of its "Documentation Service" to attacks expected to be raised by the movie starring Oscar winner Tom Hanks.

The monthly publication is circulated in dioceses, schools and Catholic organizations.

The Theological Centrum involves some priests attached to the controversial Catholic group Opus Dei ("Work of God" in Latin).

Established in 1928 by Spanish saint Josemaria Escriva, Opus Dei took what is generally regarded in Church circles as a vicious blow from Brown. The author portrays the organization in his novel as an ultra-right wing group that would kill to protect a supposed hoax in the Catholic faith.

Occasion to know Jesus

But Fr. Michael Angelo Cardenas, an Opus Dei priest and director of the Theological Centrum, said some members like him were not angered by the portrayal.

"We view it with complete openness," he told the INQUIRER yesterday, reiterating the position taken by the personal prelature of Opus Dei when the novel first came out.

Cardenas said the mind-set was to consider the controversy as an occasion "to allow more people to know Jesus Christ," the savior of humanity according to the Christian faith.

This explains why the Catholic Church is not likely to issue a counterattack on either the novel or the movie, he said.

The priest said Catholics were also not likely to respond to Brown the way Muslims did in the wake of the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad in the Western press.

Some Opus Dei members would most likely initiate explanations in forums and publications, he said.

Individual efforts

But consistent with the organization's supposed spirit, such efforts would be done in the members' individual capacities, not as a matter of following a "party line," Cardenas said.

In the Theological Centrum publication, he said the focus would be on issues like the divinity of Jesus Christ whom Brown portrayed as being "merely" human. In the best-selling novel, Brown claimed that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene.

Another theme Brown explored was the supposed suppression of the "sacred feminine" by concealing the role and importance of Magdalene in the life of Christ and the Catholic faith in general.

"There are many teaching errors in the novel to the point that there's no more respect for the faith," Cardenas said.

"The novel is packaged as fiction but the author claims it was a well-researched book. The aim really is to make people believe in several falsehoods or just to make money."

Concerned about lies

Brown, a former school teacher, was earlier sued for plagiarism for allegedly lifting much of his material from "The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail," published in the early 1980s.

This nonfiction book, by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln, similarly talked about the Jesus-Magdalene connection. It was also debunked by a number of noted Catholic authors and historians.

"We are concerned about the falsehoods because the character involved here is no ordinary one—he's a religious figure, the Son of God," Cardenas said.

Correction

IN YESTERDAY'S ISSUE, a front-page story—"1st in RP: Mom watches son on Web deliver valedictory"—misstated that Ateneo's live webcast of its grade school graduation rites was "the first in any Philippine university." The University of the Philippines-Diliman graduation ceremony last year was also broadcast live on the Internet.

* * *

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Drop rap, Imelda urges

By Nelson F. Flores

MARCOS

FORMER FIRST LADY Imelda Romualdez-Marcos has asked the Sandiganbayan Fifth Division to dismiss a 1992 graft case filed against her by the government for lack of evidence.

The case stemmed from her alleged financial interest in the realty and housing projects of the Technology Resource Center Foundation Inc. when she was minister of human settlements in 1977.

In a 23-page motion submitted last week, Marcos claimed there was nothing in the documentary and testimonial evidence submitted by the prosecution to support allegations she had a pecuniary interest in TRCFI's transactions.

Marcos's lawyer, Robert AC Sison, pointed out that none of the four witnesses called by prosecutors linked her to any anomaly in connection with projects undertaken by TRCFI.

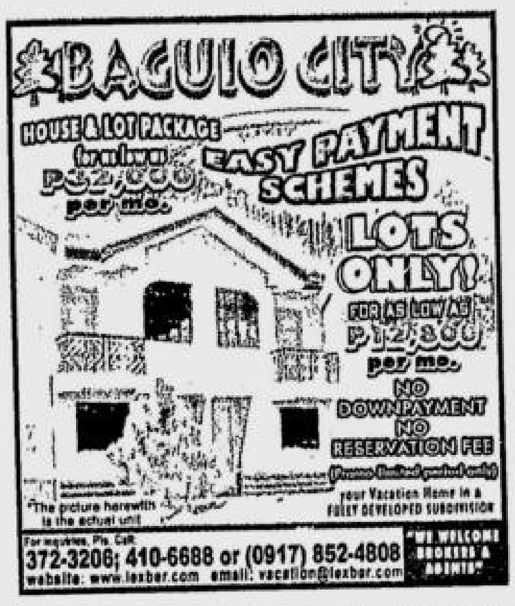
Sison noted that government auditor Rosemarie de Mesa, a prosecution witness, admitted during cross-examination that her review of the financial records of the foundation showed that Marcos was not paid "any salary, wage, allowance, fringe benefits or honoraria."

A second prosecution witness, lawyer Victor Rey Santos, TRCFI corporate secretary and external legal counsel, testified that all transactions of the foundation were legally in order.

Sison said the admissions of the two prosecution witnesses constituted sufficient ground for the dismissal of the case.

"The records would show that none of these individuals testified on the allegation in the information about the financial interest on the part of the accused over the affairs of TRCFI. This is the very crux (of the offense alleged). The instant criminal complaint must perforce fail," Sison argued.

Aside from Marcos, the other respondent in the case is former Deputy Minister of Human Settlements Jose Conrado Benitez.



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Opposition boycott puts pressure on Thaksin

From page A1

tick a box indicating they abstain from choosing a candidate.

The boycott transformed the election into a one-party race in 276 parliamentary constituencies, where Thaksin's ruling Thai Rak Thai—or Thai Love Thai—party was running uncontested.

Thaksin has promised to step down if his party receives less than 50 percent of the vote, an outcome seen as highly unlikely given his strong support among the rural majority. The opposition, however, hopes the boycott will make it impossible to fill all 500 legislative seats, which many legal experts say could make it impossible to convene Parliament and form a new government.

Election law requires that uncontested candidates garner at least 20 percent of votes—highly unlikely in some districts where Thaksin's party has little support. Any seats left unfilled could lead to several rounds of by-elections before a prime minister is chosen.

Official results Tuesday

Looking relaxed and smiling, Thaksin cast his ballot at a voting station near his residence in western Bangkok, accompanied by his three children.

"This election is very important for the direction of the country because there is a split right now," he told reporters. "Voting is the responsibility of everyone who loves democracy. They must come out and vote."

Voting stations closed at 3 p.m., with the result of exit polls expected later in the day. Official results were not expected until Tuesday, the election commission said.

Thaksin's party won an overwhelming mandate in elections last year and remains popular among rural Thais who have benefited from Thaksin's social welfare programs.

The lopsided race has prompted many to question the validity of the election.

"People will not accept this election, and the political situation will get worse," said Banharn Silpa-archa, head of the opposition Chat Thai party.

Abhisit Vejjajiva, head of the main opposition Democrat Party, said the boycott sent a strong message.

Ensure fair polls

"What we did when we took the position was to make a statement, and we made a statement," he said, calling for a close examination of the vote to rule out fraud. "We have to make sure the elections are fair—no fraud, no irregularities."

The explosions at three polling stations all occurred about 20 minutes after voting ended, said Narathiwat provincial police chief Maj. Gen. Yongyuth Charoenwanit. The province is one of three Muslim-majority provinces in the south plagued by a separatist insurgency that has left more than 1,300 dead since January 2004.

Small signs of protest occurred at voting stations around the capital.

Prominent political science professor Chaiyan Chaiporn of Chulalongkorn University made a show of ripping up his ballot card at a central Bangkok polling station, as other voters erupted in applause. He was promptly arrested but released on bail. The act is punishable by one-year in prison, a 20,000 baht ($500) fine and a five-year revocation of voting rights.

At another polling station, Saritdet Bunsakun, a 25-year-old university student, said he considered the election a sham but cast his vote to support the opposition.

Vote meaningless

"This election is meaningless," he said. "I just wanted to exercise my right to vote."

The anti-Thaksin movement adopted the slogan "Vote for No Vote," and urged people to wear black on election day as a protest symbol.

Protesters say they will keep up the battle to force Thaksin out of office regardless of the results of the poll.

A small-scale movement against Thaksin gained mass support in January, when the prime minister's family announced that it had sold its controlling stake in telecommunications company Shin Corp. to Singapore's state-owned Temasek Holdings for a tax-free 73.3 billion baht ($1.9 billion).

Critics allege the sale involved insider trading and complain a key national asset is now in a foreign government's hands. He is also accused of mishandling a Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand, stifling the media and allowing cronies to reap gains from state policies. *AP*

'Maximo' bags ...

From page A1

"There was a standing ovation after my acceptance speech," recalled Solito. "The party after the awards show was great. The people [at the gathering] thanked me for making them cry."

"Maximo," special Jury Prize winner in last year's Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival, won the Audience Award, Best Actor for lead star Nathan Lopez, and the Grand Prize, which was dubbed the Lady Harimaguada de Oro and came with a 100,000 euros (P6,242,000) cash award, at the Spanish film fest based in the Canary Islands.

Best Actress winner was Laura Linney for "The Squid and the Whale" and the second prize (or Lady Harimaguada de Plata) went to Phil Morrison's "Junebug."

Lopez tied with Israel Gomez of "La Leyenda del Tiempo" from Spain for Best Actor.

Story of gay boy

"Maximo" tells the bittersweet story of a pre-teenage gay boy who is torn between his loyalty to his family of petty thugs and his infatuation for an idealistic policeman.

The Filipino digital movie seemed tailor-made for the Las Palmas de la Gran Canarias Film Festival, which, according to its website, "reflects the many different realities which together make up the complex world we live in."

The international film fest "aims to showcase new contributions to world cinema ... [and] has introduced to the general public 'fringe' films from ... Asia, Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe," the website said.

Int'l jurors

And "with the globalization of images ... it seeks to bring attention to filmmakers that make a statement about the world by making a statement about themselves."

It also "hopes to convert the viewer into an active participant, into an interrogator," according to its website.

The film fest's international jurors included painter-filmmaker William Klein, mass communications professor Robert Gubern, actress Anna Padrao, director Mauricio Michetti, actress Leonor Benedetto, filmmaker Marc Recha and writer Zoe Valdez.

The Gran Canarias triumph is the latest international honor brought home by the low-budget digital movie. Thus far, it has won the Golden Zenith at the Montreal World Cinema Film Fest, Best Picture at the Imagine-NATIVE Film Fest in Toronto, Best First Film at the Asian Festival for First Films in Singapore, and the NETPAC Best Asian Film at the Rotterdam International Film Festival.

It also made history as the first Filipino movie to be included in the World Cinema section of the Sundance Independent Film Festival.

Other awards

In February, "Maximo" also received the Teddy Queer (or Best Gay/Lesbian Feature Film) honor at the Berlin International Film Festival, beating Hollywood films like "Capote" and "Breakfast on Pluto."

Also at the Berlinale, "Maximo" was declared Best Film by the international jury and the Second Best Film by the children's jury at the Kinderfilmfest.

The film was scripted by Michiko Yamamoto, who also wrote "Magnifico," another internationally acclaimed Filipino film that had topped the Kinderfilmfest in 2004.

"Maximo" was also chosen, along with Filipino-Americans Ian Gamazon and Neill de la Llana's "Cavite," to be part of the 35th New Directors/New Films program presented by the Museum of Modern Art and Film Society of the Lincoln Center in New York from March 22 to April 2.

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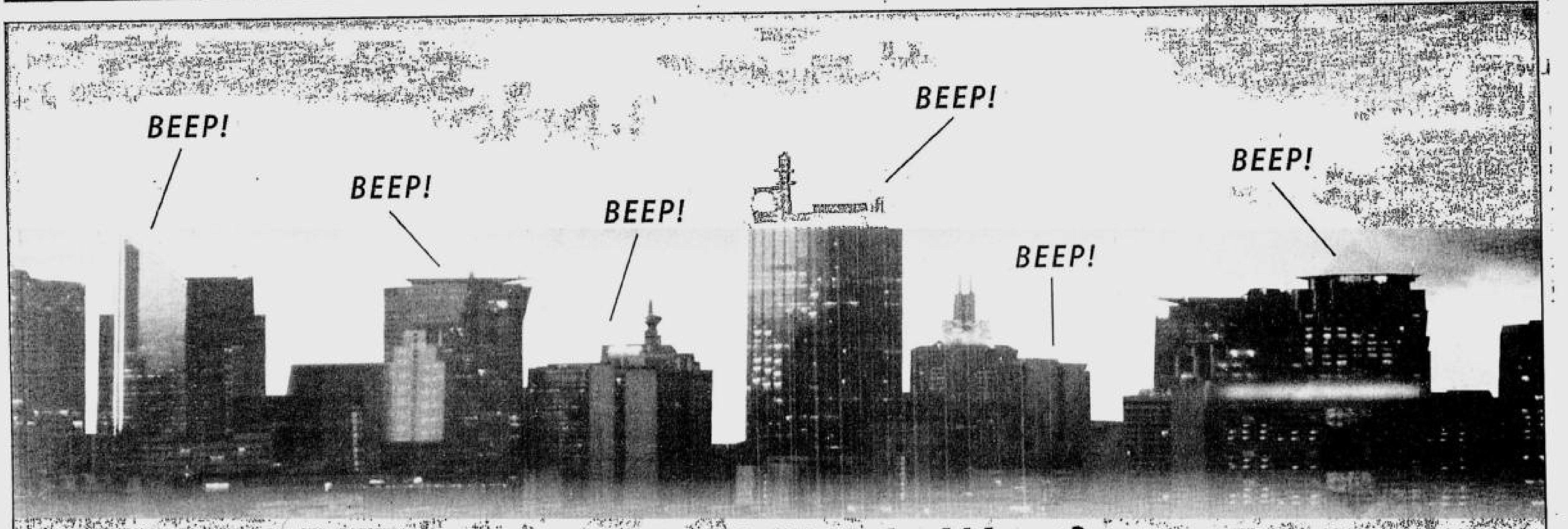

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Starlet wins reality TV show

From page A1

The talent manager refused to say how much he spent on the vote cards for both Reeves and Gonzales, but said that two outlets selling prepaid cell phone vote cards near ABS-CBN had run out of the cards since he and his friends started buying from them.

"I spent a sizeable amount of money," Abunda confided. "But Keanna also has plenty of supporters. One of them owns a chain of malls in Northern Philippines."

Tinay Palabay, secretary general of Gabriela Women's Party, told the INQUIRER yesterday that they had activated their nationwide network to help gather votes for Reeves, who had chosen the women's organization to be the recipient of the P1-million counterpart cash prize the top housemate would receive.

Gabriela has about 100,000 members nationwide, according to Palabay.

And while 10 percent of Reeves's votes came from Gabriela, the rest of her points apparently came from the masses who had rooted for the feisty Cebuana throughout her 58-day stay inside the PBB house.

Kilabot ng Senado

The starlet caused a stir for exposing an alleged escort girls' service for politicians in 2004. Reeves had sought Gabriela's help after she supposedly received death threats from lawmakers she would have exposed as customers of escort girls during a Senate investigation. The investigation was scrapped after she refused to name the politicians involved in sex trafficking.

"But we didn't campaign for support for Keanna because we would receive the P1 million," Palabay qualified. "She deserved it. She's a real person. Her courage makes her special."

A text vote costs P2.50, while a regular text costs only a peso.

"We took advantage of the unlimited text offers from cell phone service providers," Palabay said. "Really, we didn't spend much."

University of the Philippines' Prof. Dotski Abaya had sent text messages to his friends and colleagues to support Reeves.

"I think they were also having fun campaigning for Keanna," said a recipient of Abaya's text messages.

Clearly, Reeves's victory could also be attributed to the proletarian or activist vote.

Votes for second-placer Prats represented the *bagets* (youth) voice, while Gonzales drew the middle-class vote, and Marudo, the gay vote, according to a knee-jerk analysis of the voter turnout.

Live from Post Office

The masses were a major force during the live PBB Celebrity Edition show on Saturday night. A contingent of placard-bearing Gabriela members from its Tondo chapter was among the 10,000 people who watched the show at the Liwasang Bonifacio, scene of numerous antigovernment rallies.

Set against the portals of the Manila Post Office, the stage had larger-than-life posters of the celebrity housemates and a replica of the infamous PBB confession room where the housemates confronted their fears, angst and realities under the guidance of Big Brother, who was a disembodied voice throughout the 58 days that the show aired.

Before the announcement of the big winner, the top four housemates, who were blindfolded, were brought into the confession room on stage.

"They don't even know where they are," said ABS-CBN executive Deo Endrinal, while watching the top four being led to the confession room on stage.

The housemates were allowed to remove their blindfolds inside the confession room while they waited for the announcement for about an hour, holding hands and jerking their bodies nervously to the beat of music they could hear from the performances on stage.

About 200 artists performed that night.

Zsa-Zsa Padilla, Rico J. Puno, Sarah Geronimo, Christian Bautista, pep squads from different colleges in Manila, the Ateneo Glee Club, VIP Dancers, X-10 and the first season's PBB housemates opened the show with a production number called "Manila," a popular paean to the city.

Hosts Luis Manzano and Mariel Rodriguez came on stage aboard a tricycle, while evicted celebrity housemates arrived in a jeepney. Rodriguez cried while she watched a video of some of the most memorable moments inside the PBB house.

There were performances by "Panday" stars Jericho Rosales and Heart Evangelista, "Gulong ng Palad" regulars Kristine Hermosa and TJ Trinidad, a production number by the original housemates, the current celebrity housemates and the band Itchyworms to introduce the teen edition of PBB.

ABS-CBN's chair, Gabby Lopez, who was seated in the audience, could hardly contain his excitement.

On stage, as he was about to announce the big winner, Lopez said that the show was about honesty and courage.

'I want to pee'

From Feb. 5 until March 31, the whole nation watched the celebrity housemates face challenges and tasks assigned by Big Bro, including four voluntary exits and six evictions.

The country held its collective breath on March 4 as housemate Rustom Padilla "came out of the closet" in a dramatic revelation to Reeves, who almost eclipsed Padilla's confession when she went to pee on cam behind the bushes in the garden of the PBB house.

"I want to pee," was the first thing Reeves said when she was called on stage as the big winner.

"Now I know what they mean when people say it's too good to be true," she said. "This is too good to be true."

Reeves won a condominium unit, an appliance showcase and computers.

More than that, she won acceptance from the public, who now lionize her as the woman who refused to become a victim.

REEVES (right) is congratulated by housemates Bianca Gonzales and Zanjoe Marudo. RUDY ESPERAS

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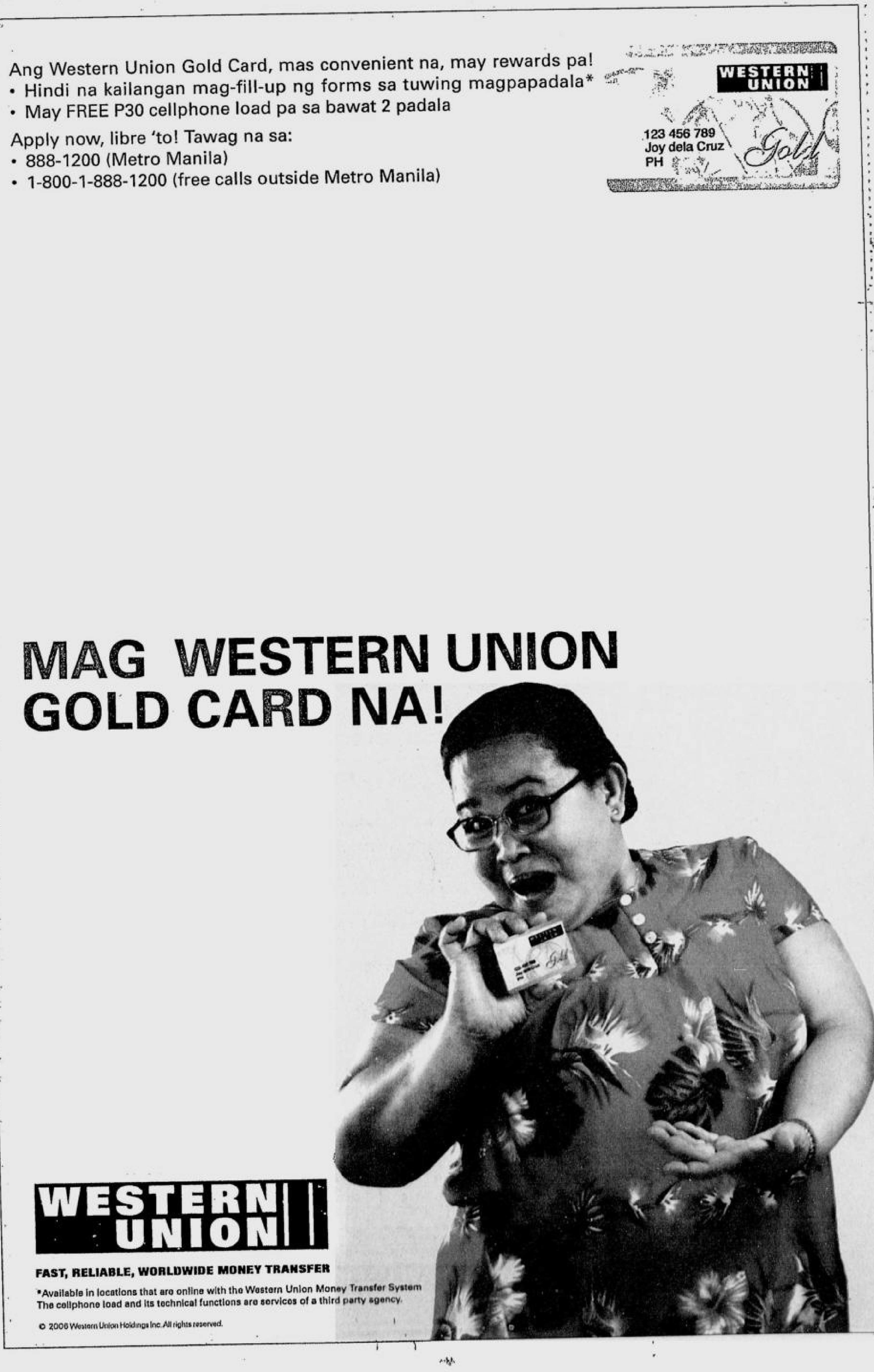

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Mayor, others charged in alleged drug overprice

THE OMBUDSMAN last Friday filed in the Sandiganbayan 108 counts of graft against Cagayan de Oro City Mayor Romulo Rodriguez Jr. and seven other city officials in connection with alleged anomalous medical supply contracts they entered into between June 1998 and June 2000.

Charged with Rodriguez were health officer Vincent L. Gonzaga, accountant Tita G. Garrido, treasurer Adelina S. Espantaleon, general services office officer in charge Benito D. Empalmado, budget officer Reynaldo N. Puno, supply officer Renato C. Chaves and new general services office head Diogenes Y. Bullecer.

They were members of the bids and awards committee for the questioned medical supply deals.

Traders

Likewise charged with graft by the Ombudsman were eight traders—Ma. Zenaida G. Leonen, Teodoro J. Caguiat, Clarissa E. Yuson, Lourdes R. Abadies, Tessie T. Latorre, Evelyn L. Tero, Marietta L. Fornolles and Jonathan C. Yuson.

They were found by the Commission on Audit to have received undue favors from the city government in the awarding of the deals.

COA auditors reported that some of the items purchased from the private distributors were allegedly overpriced by from 30 to 406 percent.

Allowable

They noted that this was way above the maximum allowable variance of 10 percent, which is to cover the cost of transportation and delivery.

The 108 supply contracts signed between 1998 and 2000 totaled P3.76 million, which was P2.28 million more than what the same items cost in the price lists provided by the Department of Health and the Northern Mindanao Medical Center, the COA auditors said.

In their counteraffidavits, the defendants said the contracts were entered into in good faith and in the routine performance of their official functions.

The Ombudsman, however, found "glaring evidence" they had ignored the DOH-NMMC prices and favored the eight drug distributors to the exclusion of others. They had also allegedly left the prequalification review only to accused Gonzaga.

Macaraig recommended bail of P23,000 for each count of graft, or about P2.48 million for each defendant. *Nelson F. Flores*

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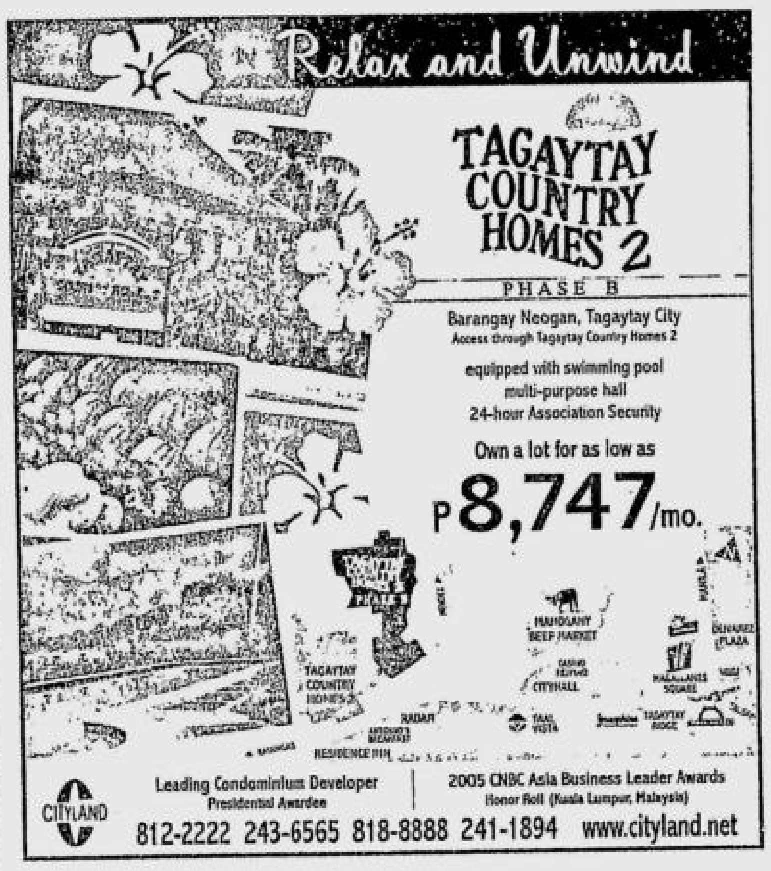
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In 1946, a Filipino of German origin, Ronald Landahl, began supplying pharmaceuticals and basic surgical devices to the country's medical health care industries under the name of Medical Center Drug Corporation. In July 1980, the name was officially changed to Medical Center Trading Corporation (MCTC). This reflected the aggressive effort to supply the broadening needs of the market. Eventually, MCTC became the leader in the importation, distribution, and marketing of hospital, medical, dental, surgical and laboratory equipment and supplies in less than five years.

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Messages

Warmest greetings to the board, officers and employees of the Medical Center Trading Corporation as you celebrate your 60th Anniversary.

Your corporation's objective of providing quality products and excellent health care complements our efforts to improve our people's access to much-needed health services. The fact that you have reached this milestone proves your success in addressing the requirements of your clients for six decades now.

May you remain steadfast in your commitment to the development of a healthy citizenry that will be the cornerstone of a progressive nation. I hope for your continued triumph in the years to come.

Again, happy anniversary! Mabuhay!

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

My warmest felicitations to the officers and staff of the Medical Center Training Corporation as they celebrate their 60th Year Anniversary.

The Department of Health commends your continuous commitment and objective of providing only the best quality products and excellent health care services for the benefit of our people.

Let us work together and increase our efforts to further improve our services and provide accessible, quality and affordable health care to all.

On this momentous occasion, may unity, reliability and perseverance be the values that guide your company as you continue your commitment to serve and improve the health needs of people.

Congratulations and mabuhay kayong lahat!

Francisco T. Duque III
Secretary
Department of Health

The 60th founding anniversary of Medical Center Trading Corporation is a cause for celebration. It is a virtual toast to the thousands who have continuously and consistently supported the ideals of the company. They have not wavered in their quest to improve the health of Filipinos.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our local and foreign suppliers who have been equally uncompromising when it comes to quality, dependability, and affordability of products meant for the Philippine market. They have shown the true value of an enduring partnership.

We also thank the general public for their trust and confidence. Through the years, customers have nurtured and strengthened our resolve to identify their changing needs and preferences. In like manner, MCTC's corps of professional personnel has been equally up to the challenge. It has withstood the challenges of the years and responded very well. The company's stakeholders can look forward to many years of quality healthcare products sourced from all over the world. We will continue to serve the Filipino people with the same resolve, vision, and vigor for many generations to come!

Maraming salamat sa inyong patuloy na pagtangkilik!

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OPINION

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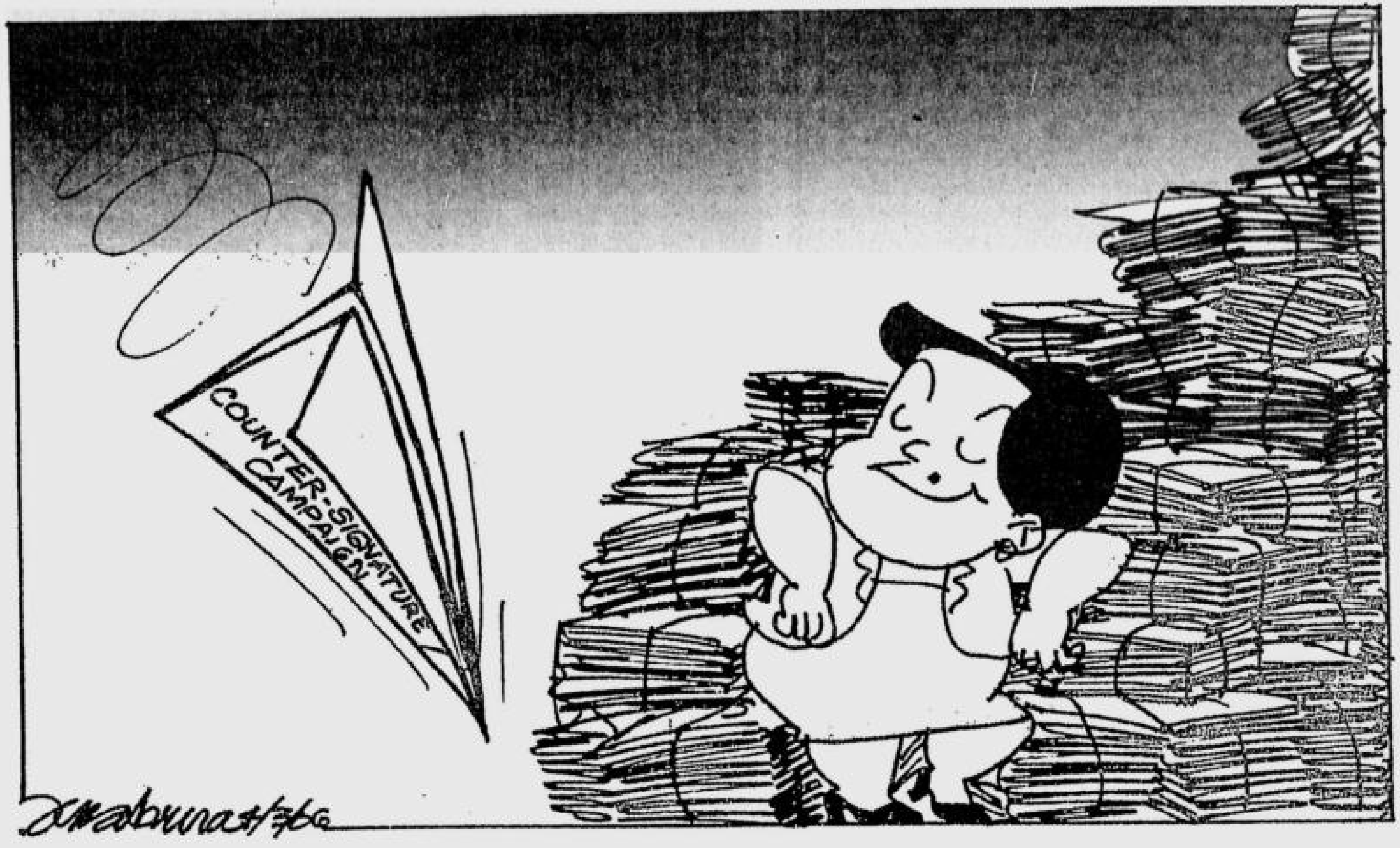

Dirty deeds

EDITORIAL

BY AND LARGE, THE PUBLIC KNOWS THE WHY OF the Arroyo administration's rush to change the Constitution; President Macapagal-Arroyo wants to survive politically until at least 2010. Not too many know the **how** of the plan, however. As columnist Raul Pangalanan explained the other day, the administration's entire strategy rests on the power of the fait accompli, the done deed.

We have denounced the strategy as chilling and "ultimately counter-democratic." Yesterday, we warned of the consequences that will come in the wake of this breathtakingly cynical policy, where "the political trumps the merely legal and ethical." Greater—perhaps even lasting—political divisiveness is too high a price to pay for any one official to deny or evade or finesse accountability—even if it's the President herself.

While the consequences are dire, the means used are also most foul. Because of the deliberate speed with which they are being put to use, the public has had little time to recognize them, much less to understand the plan behind their use.

The strategy, when one comes right down to it, is rather simple. As politicians, the officials in the administration—Palace functionaries, majority congressmen, even members of the nominally independent Commission on Elections—practice the art of the possible. The political can work at a pace much faster than the legal; that is so, in part, because the judiciary is the one branch of government designed to be passive. It cannot act unless someone files a suit before it.

(That is also why Sen. Joker Arroyo's petition to ask the Supreme Court to cite the Comelec for contempt, for deliberately disobeying the unequivocal ruling in the Santiago vs. Comelec case, is both overdue and, precisely for that reason, all the more welcome. The high court cannot act on the legal and constitutional issues that burden the controversial signature drive that seeks to create an interim parliament, unless a petition is filed before it.)

Thus, the plan is to keep doing what the administration needs to do in order to survive the President's crisis of legitimacy, even if they are controversial, or patently illegal, or downright unconstitutional. The plan, in other words, is to force the courts to play catch-up with the administration, to run and keep at least one step ahead of them until they run out of breath or call it quits. (This is the reverse of President Arroyo's I'm-tired-of-chasing-the-bully-around-the-schoolyard position; here, the plan is to run around and around the schoolyard until the teachers simply give up.)

Consider the effrontery of calling the DILG-supported, top-down signature campaign a "peoples' initiative." The administration has mobilized its resources to manufacture an alleged public groundswell; its spokespersons point to the 5 million or so signatures they claim to have compiled. But those same signatures were gathered in varied ways and under various guises; some through barangay assemblies "voting" as such, others through door-to-door campaigning, and so on. They know the public sees through the whole charade; but they also know it takes time to prepare a court suit, and even more time to produce a court decision.

Or consider the brazenness of the administration's challenge to the opposition, to prove the unconstitutionality of the whole exercise before the courts. The Supreme Court has in fact already ruled on the matter: It found the enabling law the administration is relying on to validate its people's initiative fatally inadequate. In other words, jurisprudence is already on the side of the opposition; it is the administration that must first seek a favorable ruling from the courts, before it can proceed. But the administration knows that if it proceeds anyway, it will be some time before the judiciary can even enter the picture.

Thus, the power of the done deed is all too real. It helps the administration buy time; it buttresses the administration's favorite legal presumption, that all official acts are presumed regular until proven otherwise; not least, it overburdens the case docket of the collegial Supreme Court to bursting. The plan, in sum, is deeply cynical; it undermines our institutions right to the bottom, merely to keep the President on top.

Why Filipinos are dropping dead

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

WHY ARE MANY FILIPINOS DROPPING DEAD of heart attacks and strokes? (These two ailments are among the top killers in the Philippines.) Here is one reason:

Amlodipine besylate, an important drug used for the treatment of high blood pressure marketed under the name Norvasc, is sold in Pakistan by Pfizer, a multinational company, at the equivalent of P8.74 per 5-mg tablet and P17.09 per 10-mg tablet. In the Philippines, it is sold by the same Pfizer at P44.75 per 5-mg tablet and P74.57 per 10-mg tablet.

The same Norvasc is being sold in Indonesia at the equivalent price of P21 per 5-mg tablet and P37.93 per 10-mg tablet; in Thailand, Norvasc is being sold at the equivalent price of P26.65 and P45.65, respectively.

The same medicine is sold by Pfizer in India under the brand named Amlogard at the equivalent of P5.98 per 5-mg tablet and P8.96 per 10-mg tablet. Norvasc and Amlogard are both made by Pfizer, but Pfizer sells amlodipine besylate in the Philippines at prices 650 percent and 730 percent higher than in India and more than double the price in Indonesia and Thailand.

No wonder Filipinos are dying of complications from hypertension—they cannot afford to buy medicine to control their blood pressure. The manufacturer of Norvasc—as with most other important medicines sold here—is a multinational company (80 percent of the Philippine drug market is controlled by multinational companies). The annual sales of Norvasc alone in the Philippines is P1.2 billion, according to verified information.

Why can't Filipino pharmaceutical companies manufacture their own version of amlodipine besylate so they can supply their countrymen with cheaper medicines? Why can't the Philippine government import the medicine from Pakistan and India and sell it here to give relief to Filipinos? Because of the law on patents.

This law gives a pharmaceutical company that develops a new drug a 25-year monopoly over its sale. That is to give the company enough time and opportunity to recover its investments in research and development for the drug. And the company usually prices the new drug for "as much as the market can bear"—meaning, in most cases, beyond the reach of poor patients, who die because of lack of medication. It is ironic that companies engaged in the manufacture of medicines for the care and health of people can be so callous.

It is because the executives who dictate the prices are usually far out-of-touch with the customers. These executives are ensconced in their offices in America and elsewhere, and their priority is to make as much money as they can for their companies so that they get fat bonuses and promotions at the end of the year. They couldn't care less whether or not the patients whom their products are meant to cure get well or die.

The executives who are in contact with their customers—the branch managers and other officials in the customer country—have to obey the dictates of the home office even if they know the price of medicines are already beyond the reach of sick people. Or they would be fired, demoted, or transferred.

But couldn't the government of the customer nation do something to provide its constituents relief from the high medicine prices? Yes it can, of course. As a sovereign country, it can give local pharmaceutical companies authority to manufacture equivalent medicines. When a patent for a certain medicine expires, other companies are free to manufacture their own generic versions. Or the government can allow companies to import the medicine from countries where it is sold cheaper. Or the government itself can do the importation, which is what the Philippine International Trading Center (PITC), a Philippine government corporation, is trying to do.

Pfizer's patent for Norvasc will expire on June 13, 2007. It usually takes 18 months for our Bureau of Food and Drugs to register a drug with an expired patent under the name of another company that intends to manufacture it. Thus, the PITC and local drug companies have applied for registration of their own brand of amlodipine besylate so that when Pfizer's patent expires next year, they would be ready to manufacture their own versions—or import cheaper versions, in the case of the PITC.

But Pfizer would have none of it. It has filed, before the Makati Regional Trial Court, a case for patent infringement against the PITC and BFAD. But no pharmaceutical company has yet manufactured a single tablet on amlodipine besylate. Neither has the PITC bought or sold a single tablet. So what is there to restrain?

"We have informed Pfizer that we have no intention of (importing and selling amlodipine besylate) until after the Pfizer patent expires on June 13, 2007," said Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan, president and chair of the PITC. But Pfizer filed the civil suit anyway because the case is not really "about protecting patent rights but about maintaining a monopoly beyond the patent life."

In asking the court to revoke the Parallel Import Drug Registration of the PITC and enjoining the BFAD from entertaining applications by generic companies for registration of amlodipine besylate, Pfizer seeks to extend its monopoly over the product by at least 18 months. This is the period it will take the BFAD to evaluate an application for drug registration by a generic company. The 18 months of extended monopoly translates to P2.39 billion of additional sales for Pfizer even after the expiration of its patent, Pagdanganan said. But it could mean the death or maiming of thousands of Filipinos who could suffer heart attacks and strokes because they cannot afford to buy amlodipine besylate.

Modest proposal

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I REMEMBER A CONVERSATION I HAD WITH the late Popoy Lagman in the early 1990s. He was pissed off at media for diverting public attention from the campaign to roll back oil prices and drawing it instead on the burning of buses plying the northern route, a campaign which Lagman and company had embarked on, to press their cause. Trust media, he said, to zero in on the sensational and overlook the substantial.

I gave him an analogy. I said if you were watching a play and a streaker suddenly ran stark raving naked in front of the stage, what will you watch, the play or the streaker? The play, I said, was the "Kilusang Rolbak," the audience was the media and public, and the streaker was the bus-burning. If anyone was to blame for diverting media and public attention from the real issue, I said, it was they themselves for "streaking."

Our conversation increased in temperature, and at one point he expostulated, "If you'd rather stay in the steps of the bus of history (*"sa estribo ng kasaysayan"*) than inside it, suit yourself. I replied: "If that bus is headed for the cliffs, I'd very much like to."

I remembered that conversation after I heard GMA tell the people opposing her Charter change that the train was on its way, it was up to them if they wanted to be left behind. Unfortunately, for me, Joker Arroyo and Nene Pimentel beat me to the draw. My next column was due only today and so I couldn't immediately reply, as Joker and Nene did, that since the train was headed for the cliffs, I most certainly wanted to be outside of it. Indeed, far more accurately, since the train would be running at full speed toward non-existent tracks up ahead, I could only dearly wish that GMA, Jose Pidal, the Gonzales(z) duet, Mike Defensor, Joe de V, Fidel Ramos, Prospero Pichay, and all the congressmen who opposed the impeachment bid would be on it.

The latter is the more accurate metaphor. This is a train that is running at full speed when there are no tracks up ahead. Those tracks are still being built, with all the haste and waste (of taxpayers' money) you can imagine. Indeed, with Imeldific profligacy: with all the hunger and joblessness gripping the country—I would dearly wish as well that Trade Secretary Peter Favila, who has just said that the reason Filipinos can't find work is not that there are no jobs but that they are just picky, should find himself in a PAL plane full of OFWs who have just torn themselves from the embrace of their children to embark on their places of exile—it's more than criminal negligence to be wasting precious resources to manufacture an artificial demand.

The proponents of Charter change argue that the latest surveys show that public resistance to it is weakening. Though more Filipinos still do not want Charter change compared to those who want it, more Filipinos now want it compared to some months ago. Their argument refutes their position. If that is true, then clearly there exists no prior public demand for Charter change since the demand is still in the process of being made. It is not spontaneous, it is not widely felt, it is not urgent. Compare that to a real, prior, preexisting public demand, one that is completely spontaneous, widely felt, and urgently sounded, which is for GMA to resign. You'll find that in the surveys of Pulse Asia and SWS. If a signature demand for Charter change coming from a handful of local officials cannot be ignored, a popular demand for GMA to resign coming from the populace may even be less so.

I can imagine that if you tell the folk in the countryside that Charter change will add more power to the provinces and subtract it from "imperial Manila," many of them will say yes to Charter change. That doesn't mean that they will want GMA to stay in power. The two are not mutually exclusive: Many of the people who say they want Charter change are likely to be the same ones who do not want GMA to be around. Or more directly, who do not want GMA to preside over Charter change.

Easy enough to put this theory to a test. I myself am proposing a plebiscite that will pose four questions, and daring the people who are furiously shoveling fuel into the iron horse called Cha-cha to carry it out if they are serious about heeding public sentiment. The plebiscite, of course, being premised on: one, all the Comelec commissioners who presided over the 2004 elections being fired and replaced with people who know how to count—or can recognize authentic ballots; and, two, an international team of observers to observe its conduct.

The four questions, to be answered by "Yes," "No," or "Abstain," are: 1. Do you want Charter change? 2. Do you want Charter change under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo? 3. Do you want Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to resign? 4. Do you want snap elections to determine the president of this country?

Why should we have a plebiscite only about Charter change, the demand for it being at the very most arguable, and not about the legitimacy of the current President; questions about it being at the very least patent? Why should we have a plebiscite only about Charter change whose ramifications at the very most remain confused and misunderstood, and not about leadership change whose assumptions and implications have been fully grasped? Why should we have a plebiscite only about Charter change, whose positive impact on the society has yet to be glimpsed, and not about removing a usurper, whose negative impact on society is daily and universally felt?

A plebiscite demands from its respondents, like a court of law from its witnesses, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. All an exclusive plebiscite on Cha-cha will ferret out is the lie, the whole lie, and nothing but the lie.

Why amendments only?

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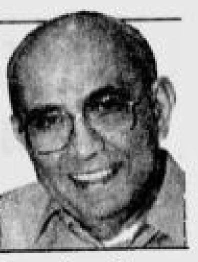

SOMETIME LAST DECEMBER, I WROTE A PIECE about constitutional revision, which I titled "Desperately trying." Unlike a recent off-the-cuff remark I made in a phone conversation with a reporter, it did not make the INQUIRER's headline and it passed largely unnoticed.

Among the things I said then were: Firstly, that initiative and referendum as a mode of amending the Constitution must be supported by an enabling law. As the Supreme Court said in 1997, "the Comelec should be permanently enjoined from entertaining or taking cognizance of any petition for initiative on amendments to the Constitution until a sufficient law shall have been validly enacted to provide for the implementation of the system." Secondly, I said that initiative and referendum could be used only for amendments (or simple changes) and not for revision (or an overall recasting) of the constitutional structure.

So much has already been said about these, in varying degrees of intensity, and I do not see much point in repeating them now, especially since they are not being listened to anyway. But let me focus instead on just one point: Why must initiative and referendum be allowed only for "amendments" and not also for revision?

To answer this question one must make a distinction between amendment and revision. Article XV of the 1935 Constitution provided for the manner of proposing, submitting and ratifying amendments to the Constitution, but it was silent about revision. Article XVI of the 1973 Constitution provided for the manner of proposing, submitting and ratifying both amendments to and revisions of the Constitution. So does the 1987 Constitution. Is the distinction between amendment and revision then constitutionally significant? It is—precisely because "revision," according to Section 2 of Article XVII, may not be undertaken through initiative and referendum. Only "amendments" can be the subject of initiative and referendum.

An amendment envisages an alteration of one or a few specific and separable provisions. The guiding original intention of an amendment is to improve specific parts or to add new provisions deemed necessary to meet new conditions or to suppress specific portions that may have become obsolete or that are judged to be dangerous. In revision, however, the guiding original intention and plan contemplate a re-examination of the entire document—or of provisions of the document (which have overall implications for the entire document or for the fundamental philosophical underpinnings of the document)—to determine how and to what extent it should be altered. Thus, for instance, a switch from the presidential system to a parliamentary system would be a revision because of its overall impact on the entire constitutional structure. So would a switch from a bicameral system to a unicameral system because of its effect on other important provisions of the Constitution.

It is thus clear that what distinguishes revision from amendment is not the quantum of change in the document. Rather, it is the fundamental qualitative alteration that effects revision. Hence, I must reject the puerile argument that the use of the plural form of "amendments" means that a revision can be achieved by the introduction of a multiplicity of amendments!

But the further question really is: Why only amendments? The answer, which one can easily glean from the rather long deliberations on initiative and referendum in the 1986 Constitutional Commission, is practicality. In other words, who is to formulate the revision or how is it to be formulated?

If one has even only a cursory familiarity with the legislative process, he or she will easily realize how many times a provision is altered and re-altered before it reaches its final form. If this is true of simple changes, how much more complicated would it be if the revision of a Constitution were involved? Just as an example, it took the 1986 Constitutional Commission so much debate, through more than five months, to revise the 1973 Constitution. How can millions of voters agree on a formula to be presented first for signatures and finally for ratification in a plebiscite? Thus you naturally wonder (or, perhaps, you should not wonder) how the formula presented to the people two Saturdays ago was formulated, and who formulated it. Was it an initiative of the people? Perhaps, we are not allowed to ask that under pain of being considered destabilizers!

In the initiative and referendum process, the first step, after a formula has been polished, is the gathering of signatures to support it, and the second step is the presentation of the formula to the people in a plebiscite. Assuming that the required number of signatures was obtained two Saturdays ago, what proposal will be presented to the voters for intelligent assessment in a plebiscite? I recall that in 1971, when the Constitutional Convention wanted to rush the approval of the lowering of the voting age, the Supreme Court said that the proposed change could not be presented in a plebiscite yet in the absence of a completely formulated draft Constitution. Without a complete draft, the individual amendment would have no context. What would be the context for the proposal to repeal Articles VI and VII of the present Constitution?

I am afraid that what is going on involves not just unconstitutionality but also duplicity.

The greatest heist of all

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

JOLO, SULU—IT SEEMS THE ONLY THING THAT unites us now in Jolo is our collective grief over the incredibly cruel and incomprehensible death of five of our townmates in the bomb blast that hit our one and only consumers cooperative store. Even as I write this, people are still looking for body parts to bury. One of the victims just literally was blown to smithereens. Nothing could be found of him.

I thought that at this time of my life, after all that I have witnessed in this war-afflicted province, I have become inured to events and sights such as this. I have seen more than my share of bloated bodies, bullet-riddled corpses, popped-out eyes, bloody mess, tissue and bones of what were once human beings; the most unforgettable among them, that of parents scooping up the brains of the children I had seen at play amid the shelling and strafing, half an hour earlier when I passed by their place.

But this latest violence I could not take anymore. Those who fell here were not mere "victims." If there is any citation I could honor them with, it is for being the nicest sales staff I ever had the experience of dealing with. They were always courteous, never too busy to look for an item you couldn't find on the shelves; one of them would always greet me and ask how I was as she passed on a bit of news about someone or something.

I feel for them a kind of grief too deep for tears.

And in the midst of it all, came not a bullet train, but the bulldozer of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo—the so-called "people's initiative" designed to ensure our perpetual bondage to a ruler of very doubtful legitimacy.

By her own admission, she was causing divisiveness in the nation, something which became apparent soon after she assumed the presidency. And for that reason, she promised not to run for president in the elections of 2004.

She made that vow in December 2002. A year later, she changed her mind and, since then, she has done everything to divide political parties, the military, Congress, local governments, the judiciary, the clergy and, of course, the people.

And now with the "people's initiative" by which she and her allies would ram a new constitution down our throats—to complete the grand cover-up of all the questions about her legitimacy and of the charges of corruption against her and her close associates—we, in this town, are now divided even as we still have to bury our dead.

We have been waylaid into endless discussions on the legality of using wiretapped conversations as evidence, but not on the use of the military to record the telephone conversations of Virgilio Garcillano. We have twitted Ignacio Bunye for singing "I have two discs, the left and the right," but not his production of those CDs in the first place. We have accepted the fact that some of the best, most honorable and most valiant among our military officers are now jailed and undergoing court martial, but not why they risked their careers by speaking out-of-line of the chain of command. We are questioning the legality of EO 464 and the calibrated preemptive response but not why these were issued.

And now we are questioning the sneakiness and even the funding of the "people's initiative," but not whether it is right that Ms Arroyo should start up the bulldozer's engine or run it herself.

If, in the future, our progeny will see it written in our history that we allowed ourselves, as a nation, to be governed by force of a "Constitution" rammed down our throats by a President who was never elected to office, we will certainly deserve the ignominy.

This is the primordial issue. All else—the perceived plunder of millions of fertilizer funds and recovered Marcos money, the massive and widespread corruption, the duplicity, are mere incidentals to this most basic question.

At this point, what has been uncovered so far shows mainly that our sovereign will has been violated twice: the first, in the ouster—through unconstitutional means—of a duly elected President who won the elections with an overwhelming majority, without cheating (after which he was subjected to public humiliation when he was made to undergo fingerprinting and to pose for mug shots in full view of millions of TV viewers; yet now, his request for a media coverage of his own testimony has been denied). The second, when our votes were callously stolen from us in the most fraud-fraught Philippine election in memory, perpetrated at our expense—literally.

Finally, we are now being bulldozed into legitimizing all these violations of our rights and freedoms. And as malodorously as the mountain of garbage in Payatas snuffed out, some years back, a number of miserable lives struggling to survive from its dregs, GMA's proposed Constitution will cover up all questions about her legitimacy and corrupt leadership; and out of this Constitution, we will be reborn as a people suffering from the most insidious kind of amnesia.

We will forget that this is a country that came into being with the blood of heroes, like Andres Bonifacio and Jose Rizal, who gave their lives that we may be free. We will forget that there once lived in this country such honorable Filipinos as Manuel Quezon Sr., Sergio Osmeña Sr., Claro M. Recto, Carlos Romulo, Ramon Magsaysay, Lorenzo Tañada, Chino Roces, who gave the best years of their lives, the best of their knowledge, the best of their talents to make us a nation worthy of the world's respect.

What we will remember instead is that after all the blood, sweat and tears of these noble men and women who laid or risked their lives so that our people may be forever free, we gave this country to Jose Pidal on a golden platter.

***

Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com

Assassination with a smile

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THEY SAY IF YOU PUT A FROG IN A PAN OF COLD water and put the pan on a lit stove, the frog won't notice what's going on until it has been boiled to death. With all the croaking of delight going on in the House of Representatives, the biggest bullfrog of them all, Speaker Jose de Venecia, doesn't know what's happening to him, that his political prospects are being boiled slowly, and he's dying with a smile. He's also being killed with a smile: and no one has a bigger smile, I'm sure, than the "Hulk Hogan" of the President, Rep. Prospero Pichay.

Let's go down the list of what the members of the House can look forward to—then ask: At the end of the day, who will be able to claim credit for making so many congressional dreams come true? The Speaker, or the President?

Today, it's a three-year term for three terms, after which a House member has to give way to wife, husband, brother, son, nephew, niece, or brother-in-law and so on. Under the proposed constitution, it will be a five-year term, with no limits on the number of terms. No sharing required. Fewer elections needed. Who will be able to claim credit for the delightful reduction in campaign expenses, and as iron-clad a guarantee of job security as can be in politics? The Speaker, who hasn't even been able to muster the 195 signatures for Charter change he had bragged about, or the President, who has been issuing marching orders to governors who are also salivating at the prospect of "no term limits" and of one "extra term," election-free?

And who has made possible the dawn of the Age of Amendments? The Speaker, or the President? Like Buzz Lightyear in "Toy Story," the congressional slogan is: "To infinity—and beyond!" But who laid down the tracks, secured the locomotives? Who is now manning the control room in the Charter change express? The Speaker, or the President in cooperation with her interior secretary?

Donald Dee and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industries might complain? Jose Abueva displeased that federalism is not moving or mutating? Who co-opted them and made them pliable? Was it the Speaker, or the President?

The media might catch the House members increasing their pork barrel or further bloating their allowances? The public might care? An audit might ensue? Who implied an audit of the expenditures of the current House leadership might be in order? The Speaker? No, he would be the primary target of a politically inconvenient audit of funds. Wasn't it Pichay who hinted at such a possibility? Who can say? But those politically-in-the-know claim this was the not-so-subtle message given when Pichay made a gambit for the speakership. Of course, the gambit bombed—but then, that wasn't the real purpose of the gambit, was it? And to whom is Pichay loyal? The Speaker, or the President?

Who is laying out the exciting possibility that never again will an elected representative have to be responsible to anything larger than the immediate domains of his district? Whatever emerges from Charter change—strong or decorative president, strong or weak prime minister, but always and forever a unicameral parliament—never again will the national have a say in the local. So what if there is a CBCP? It's national. Individual bishops are easier to co-opt. What politician will ever have to fear the clout of the Iglesia ni Cristo? In every district, Ka Erdie Manalo will merely be as important as any other minority group head—which is to say, unimportant at all. Who cares if there's an Integrated Bar of the Philippines? For every IBP member there are scores of other lawyers to keep on the other side. And the media? Let them report and say what they want; there can't be national consequences anyway, since there will be no nationally elected positions.

In the district, the national doesn't matter; and even if it does, who will dare bring up what a national organization says before the local kingpin? What the kingpin wants, the kingpin gets, and with only a few hundred thousand at most to deal with per district, each kingpin won't have to care what the surveys say. Who is poised to make such a political paradise possible? The Speaker? But where was Charter change before the President came along? Neither the Speaker nor former President Ramos managed to put it on a running train; and now Ramos has been shown to be out-of-touch and no longer in command. Who, by the way, managed to cut FVR down to size? The Speaker, or the President?

Which also means: having reduced FVR to simply the eldest member of the administration's Hallelujah Chorus, isn't the Speaker pretty much the same thing, now? And who has done that? Certainly not the Speaker. He wanted it done by means of his beloved fellow congressmen leading a charge uphill against the Senate. They haven't managed to do that. Who is outflanking and outmaneuvering the Senate? Not the Speaker. If not the Speaker, then who? The President. With a little help from her friends.

Who will you talk to, if you want the President's ear? The Speaker? Take note: for whom do the congressmen make a beeline on the session floor: the President's son. Watch who keeps a watchful eye in committee hearings: Pichay.

The twinkle in their eyes, the jauntiness of their steps, the happy anticipation in their bellies, if not in their loins: the thrill of the congressmen awaiting their magical transformation into assemblymen; the happy thrill of mayors and governors who can stay in office forever, with a direct line to the Palace; who is responsible for so much political happiness? The Speaker? No. Ask any of the about-to-be blessed, and they will say they're happy because "GMA Cares." And when she stops caring for the Speaker, what then? What is the sound of an ex-Speaker screaming? Political silence.

***

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph/blog

A guest speaker in Sitio Talaga

COMMENTARY

Eugenia Duran-Apostol

WE WERE FLATTERED NO END TO RECEIVE LAST WEEK an invitation to be the commencement speaker for a graduating class that holds a special place in our hearts here at the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP).

There were only 20 graduates in the class—10 boys and 10 girls—all sixth graders of the Sitio Talaga Elementary School in Barangay Maybangcal, Morong, Rizal.

This school was the first school ever adopted by our FWWPP and our first project under the Education Revolution banner. And the graduation was the first-ever for the Sitio Talaga Elementary School.

The first time we saw these children, they were in Grade 3 and the elementary school had only two buildings. At that time, the Department of Education still classified the school as an annex of Maybangcal Elementary School because the former could only handle up to Grade 3. We held our community gatherings outdoors in the shade of a huge mango tree.

Today, Sitio Talaga ES is classified as a "complete school," which means they have Grade 1 to Grade 6 classes. They now have a new building, donated by the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce about a year ago. Ms Clarita Rino, teacher in charge, manages a faculty of five teachers.

The prospect of going to Sitio Talaga was exciting enough—until I sat down to plan what to say. What does one say publicly to kids 10 to 11 years of age? I was stumped.

I have braved audiences of college students pursuing journalism degrees at my alma mater, the University of Santo Tomas and at the University of the Philippines. I even journeyed to Washington, D.C. where an audience of media big shots awarded me on Oct. 9, 2001 the Knight International Fellowship Lifetime Achievement Award for Journalism.

I even had the temerity to tell the international media: "Our own nationalists had been expressing themselves in books and periodicals in Spanish, Tagalog, Visayan and the other vernaculars, but the Thomasites changed all that to American English. We learned so fast and so well, that by the time the US 'granted' us independence—in 1947, less than 50 years later—we had developed the most robust English free press in Asia."

But what do I tell an audience of young girls and boys from rural Calabarzon, in Filipino at that? Remember, Bicol is my native tongue.

Butch Hernandez, the FWWPP's executive director, suggested that I begin with a children's story to catch their attention. So I dug up my "Stories for Groovy Kids" by Nick Joaquin. After going through the book, I found each and every story too long. I went through recent and current issues of the Reader's Digest but found nothing interesting enough for children.

Between these and the task of helping put out the monthly Mr. & Ms. Magazine, my duties as board chair of the FWWPP, the fund-raising for Santisimo Rosario Church along Estrada and Dian Streets and my ballroom exercises, Sitio Talaga's graduation day arrived—with no commencement address in my hand.

It was going to take one and a half hours to get to Morong and, perhaps, another half-hour up the very rough road to the school. (The DepEd was not joking when it said that Sitio Talaga ES was a "remote school.") I had hoped for a spark of inspiration along the trip. No such luck.

But when we got to the school, we were handed copies of the pink-colored graduation program, and there on the inside face of the back cover was the "Panunumpa ng mga Nagsipagtapos" (Oath of the Graduates).

Here it is, in lyrical Filipino:

"...una sa lahat ay isaaalang-alang
ang Panginoong Diyos na nagbigay buhay,
Lagi ng sundin ang utos Niya at aral
...Ikalawa'y bayan ang paglilingkuran
Iibigin naming buong katapatan
At kahit ialay buhay naming tangan
Kung ikalalaya nitong Inang Bayan
Aming sisikapin sa aming tahanan
Ay magbuklod kami ng pagmamahalan
Igagalang namin ang aming mga magulang
Paglilingkuran sila habang-buhay.
At ngayo'y sarili di kalilimutan
Kalusugan nami'y pangangalagaan
Pakikislapin din diwa at isipan
Sa lahat ng dako'y magpakarangal.
Na ang pangakong ito'y
Aming gagampanan
Aming sisikaping isakatuparan
Kaya't hiling namin ang Iyong patnubay
O Diyos at Panginoon naming mahal."

Could I do better than to remind them to keep these beautiful words close to their hearts?

So after the musical numbers, contributed by teachers Gerric M. Belen, Lourdes Tica and Mary Ann S. Cagayan, came the formal DepEd recognition of the graduates by District Superintendent Agapito Caritativo and the awarding of medals by Mayor Joseph Buenaventura to valedictorian Anna Rose L. Rivera and salutatorian Kennedy M. Belen. Then it was time for me to give my "Payo sa mga Nagtapos" (Advice to the Graduates).

I really could do no better than just repeat their oath and ask them never to forget the words they had sworn to this very day:

1. Always remember what God has commanded and obey Him at all times.
2. Serve our motherland, with our lives if need be. Love and honor our parents all our lives.
3. Take good care of our health, and make our souls shine with bright thoughts.
4. Lead our lives with dignity and honor, by the grace of God.

Touched not so much by my words but certainly by the solemnity of the occasion, the children and their parents were in tears. After Grade 6, what next?

Anna, the valedictorian, wants to be a flight attendant when she grows up. She is the daughter of a carpenter and a seamstress and neither parent was present on this day. The father of Kennedy, the salutatorian, is also a carpenter, while his mother was a former public school teacher. Kennedy himself wants to be a teacher. Both Anna and Kennedy are not sure if they would have the chance to go to high school, much less pursue their dreams.

We tried to wipe their tears away with the ice cream and cookies we brought and distributed soon after.

(You may send email to the author at execdir@fwwpp.org.)

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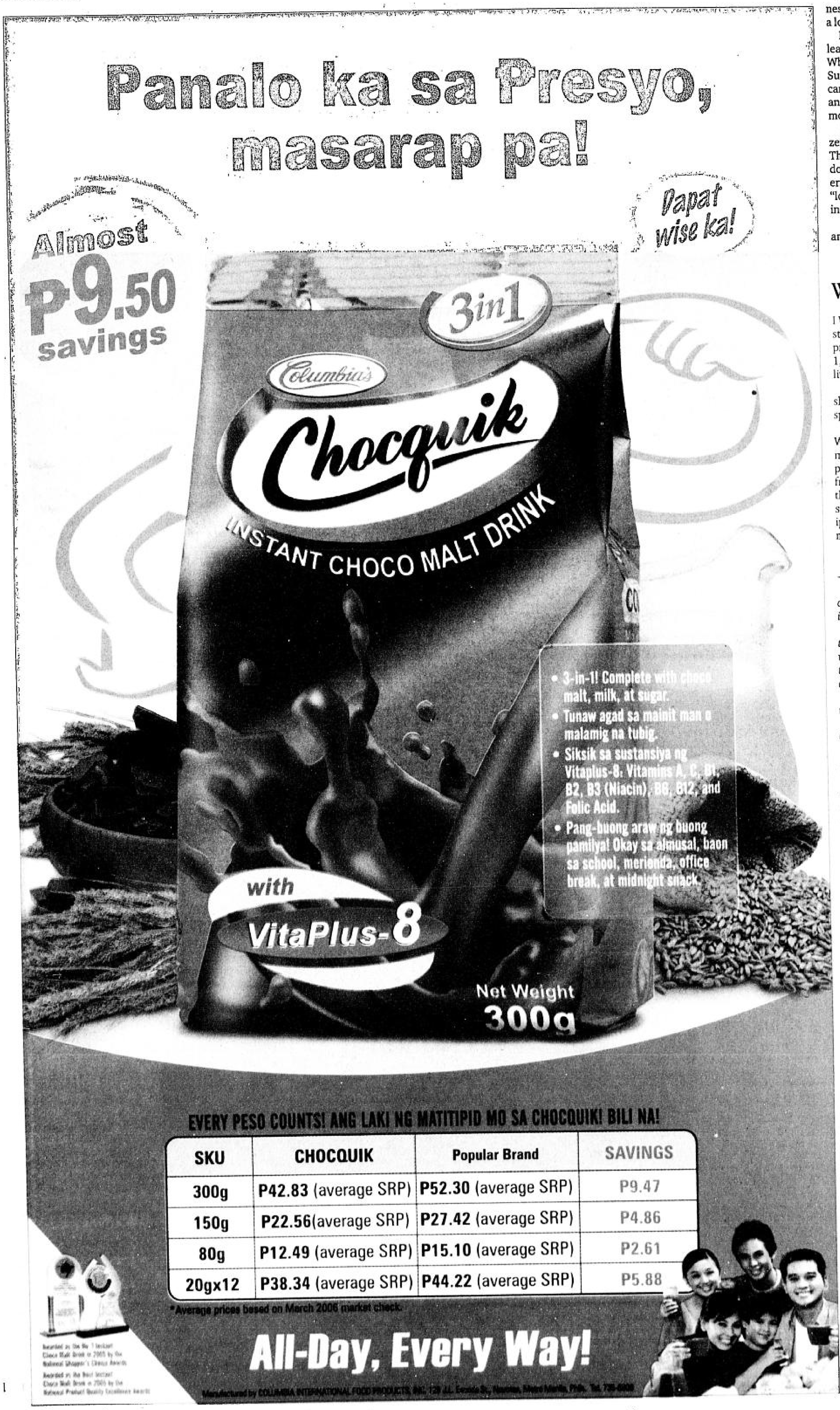

- 3-in-1! Complete with choco malt, milk, at sugar.
- Tunaw agad sa mainit man o malamig na tubig.
- Siksik sa sustansiya ng Vitaplus-8: Vitamins A, C, B1, B2, B3 (Niacin), B6, B12, and Folic Acid.
- Pang-buong araw ng buong pamilya! Okay sa almusal, baon sa school, merienda, office break, at midnight snack.

EVERY PESO COUNTS! ANG LAKI NG MATITIPID MO SA CHOCQUIK! BILI NA!

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80g	P12.49 (average SRP)	P15.10 (average SRP)	P2.61
20gx12	P38.34 (average SRP)	P44.22 (average SRP)	P5.88

*Average prices based on March 2006 market check.

Daily dose of kindness

THE NEWSPAPER ON A SUNDAY MORNING can be at times so stressful and frustrating with all the bad and negative news one is bound to read. Fortunately, the March 19 issue of the INQUIRER was a relief.

The news items about the Fil-Am boy who raised funds for the Leyte victims and about the Pinoy in Nigeria who was saved by an act of kindness in the past had a positive effect on me and, I hope, on other readers as well.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

The articles led me to ask myself: What and when was my last act of kindness? An hour ago? Yesterday? A week ago? Will we need another tragedy in order to be moved to do specific acts of kindness? I hope not. I want to believe that there are still a lot of people out there who show acts of kindness in more normal circumstances.

If only each one of us will do an act of kindness each day, I believe that this country will be a lot better.

I exhort our politicians and government leaders to always ask themselves every day: What act of kindness can I perform today? Surely, each one of them will discover that they can do a lot more. There will be less bickering and "self-service projects." They can focus more on the real needs of their constituents.

But I am also calling on the ordinary citizens. Let us not wait for our leaders to do it. This is something we can do on our own as it does not depend on the efficiency of our government. May all of us be a firm believer of "love" so that there will be more selfless people in this part of the world.

Looking forward for more positive articles and news items.

—CRISTY AURE,
Bacood, Sta. Mesa, Manila

Why not on front page?

I WAS READING WITH INTEREST THE NEWS story tilted "Citrus farmers restive over mining project." (PDI, 3/15/06) It mentioned that 1,000 tribal families could possibly lose their livelihood.

Forgive me if I'm being presumptuous, but shouldn't something this important merit a space on the front page of the INQUIRER?

I'm not saying it should be on the front page. What I'm saying is that, given the developments during those days (e.g., the INQUIRER reported Sen. Jamby Madrigal's outburst on the front page for two days), wasn't the story on the possible siltation of an entire valley and the subsequent displacement of a thousand Filipino families a tiny bit more important? And more interesting, even?

—KRISELLE LAO,
gataslock@yahoo.com

We strive day by day to make every single page of the INQUIRER interesting and thought-provoking. Not just Page 1.

That we elicited a spirited response from you to a story on Page A20 makes us feel good that we are succeeding to make the entire paper worthy of our readers' attention and call to action (if any).

Thank you for taking time to point out how we can be of better service to you.—Ed.

Touch-up done on 'horrible' roads

THIS REFERS TO THE LETTER, TITLED "Samar roads do not lead to progress" of Rev. Fr. Fidel Fabile (PDI, 2/8/06), regarding the "horrible" roads going to Catbalogan.

Based on reports from the DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways)-Samar District, the 16-kilometer stretch of the Tizon-Tarangnan-Catbalogan road was badly damaged last year because of heavy rains and landslides. However, that stretch has been given maintenance touch-ups for the convenience of commuters and motorists.

—ELIZABETH P. PILORIN,
OIC-chief, Public Information Division,
Department of Public Works and Highways,
Bonifacio Drive, Port Area, Manila

What hero?

BASILAN HERO? WAS THERE A HERO IN THE Lamitan siege? (PDI, 3/10/06)

Everybody remembers Lamitan as the scene of skullduggery, when cornered Muslim bandits were allowed, for millions of reasons, to slip through the tight cordon of "valiant" Philippine soldiers.

—RENE TORRES,
rentorres@yahoo.com

Resignation as a cure

THE FILIPINO PEOPLE CANNOT ACCEPT Charter change unless Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo steps down. Allowing the Arroyo administration to introduce amendments to our Constitution will be like saying we are giving up on our demand for her impeachment.

GMA's resignation, not Charter change, is the cure to our nation's ills. Why should we bother ourselves with another issue when the issue of GMA's legitimacy has yet to be resolved?

—ROMEO D. MONTEALTO,
Campaner Street, Zamboanga City

Gov't anticrime body faces ax

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE NATIONAL ANTI-Crime Task Force, which was at the forefront of the government's anticrime efforts during the tenure of then Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, is now inactive.

A ranking police officer said the Camp Crame-based task force was no longer functioning as it used to.

"Effectively, the operations have stood down. (There have been) no more operations," the officer said.

"Nactaf integrates, directs and supervises operations. It even provides funds to support operating units, mostly PNP units," he said, adding that the task force no longer did that now.

The Department of Interior and Local Government, the officer said without elaborating, apparently had a "change of priority and concerns" since Ronaldo Puno took over from Reyes in February. Reyes was appointed secretary of the environment and natural resources.

The opposition has accused the interior department of spearheading the signature drive aimed at amending the 1987 Constitution.

In fact, Nactaf is now simply waiting to be dissolved, the INQUIRER source said.

"(Puno) wants to give instructions (directly) to the Philippine National Police, and no (longer) through the task force," said the officer, who is familiar with the task force's operations. He asked for anonymity because of his position.

But Interior Undersecretary Melchor Rosales said Nactaf was "still operational."

But, "I can't comment about that," Rosales said when asked about Nactaf's impending dissolution.

Nactaf holds office on the ground floor of the Philippine National Police headquarters. The office, completed a few months ago, serves as a war room, where officers can monitor the progress of an ongoing police operation.

"The task force is just waiting for the dissolution order. There is no activity, except administration work... There was a change of priority. Concerns changed," the source said.

Among the last cases Nactaf had monitored was the political situation in Abra, where the entire police force was sacked last year for failure to dismantle private armed groups in the province.

Nactaf was created to coordinate the operations of anticrime units and special task forces, such as the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force and the Presidential Anti-Crime and Emergency Response group.

"Numerous task forces have been created to deal with specific crimes and there is a need to streamline these task forces to rationalize resources and harmonize strategies that will intensify the fight against criminality," the executive order that created Nactaf states.

Nactaf was supposed to assess anticrime bodies created by executive order and recommend their retention or abolition to the President.

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PHILIP MOLENO
CPA Economist

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Police nab 2 rich gang members

THE POLICE HAVE arrested two young men who were allegedly part of a gang whose members, scions of wealthy families, had left a trail of dead and wounded and rape victims in and around Metro Manila in the last six months.

The police believed the gang was responsible for nearly two dozen shooting and rape incidents in the metropolis as well as Central and Southern Luzon.

Both in their 20s, the suspects were tagged by witnesses as being involved in three murder and one frustrated murder cases, according to police.

"Their behavioral pattern," the police said, "indicates that they are involved in thrill killings, rape and petty robberies."

The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group described the gang's members as "thrill killers" who belonged to the "Old School Gangstah" fraternity comprised of 18 to 25-year-olds.

"(They are) scions of prominent and influential families in Central Luzon," the CIDG said in a statement yesterday.

"We cannot allow these activities to go unpunished. Members of the gang are known to be notorious... and some of their families (come) from rich and influential backgrounds (and) tolerate them," CIDG director Chief Supt. Jesus Versoza said.

Supt. Benjamin de los Santos has been named to head Task Force 3K, which was created to go after the group.

The group's members raped five women in the last few months, the police said.

In November alone, the group allegedly struck in Bacoor, Cavite; Pila, Laguna; Cainta, Rizal, and Las Piñas, Mandaluyong and Makati cities.

In December, they struck again in Angono and Binangonan, Rizal; San Agustin, Pampanga; Lipa City, Batangas, and Parañaque City.

Luige A. del Puerto

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- Ballpen/pencil

What traits Employers look for
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- Pleasing Personality

How to prepare for a successful Job interview:
- Have a good night's rest.
- Prepare the things that you will need the night prior to your interview.
- Come in business attire 30 minutes before the opening of the Jobs Fair.
- Memorize highlights of your resume.
- Research and know the profile of your prospective employer/s.
- Think positive. Look confident and present yourself as an excellent employee.
- Do not sit down until you are told to do so.
- Do not wear excessive pieces of jewelry, make-up, perfume, accessories, etc.
- Be calm and polite in answering questions. Give intelligent answers, not long speeches.
- Let the interviewer know that you are interested in the job and the company, not on how much you will earn.
- Thank the interviewer for his time once the interview is over.

Frequently asked questions and how to answer them during the interview:

Why are you applying for this job?
Explain how this job matches your career goals.

Why do you want to leave your present job?
Do not badmouth your current employer; just say that you are ready for newer and bigger challenges.

What do you expect from this job?
Career growth, skills improvement, learning new things, meeting bigger challenges.

Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?
Show a flexible career path that has focus and direction.

How do you take criticism?
Admit that criticism hurts but you can also use it as a tool to improve on yourself.

PROGRAMME

CEBU CITY
4 - 5 April 2006
Pacific Grand Ballroom,
Waterfront Hotel & Casino, Cebu City

3 April, Monday	Pre-event
2:00pm - 7:00pm	Exhibitors' Registration & Set up (to include test-run of software program)
2:00pm	Exhibitors' Briefing
4 April, Tuesday	
9:00 - 6:00pm	On-site Registration of Applicants Appointment Sessions
10:00am - 12:00nn	Forum: *"Create a Winning Impression"*
2:00pm - 4:00 pm	Forum: *"The Employment System"*
5 April, Wednesday	
9.00 - 6:00pm	On-site Registration of Applicants
9:00 - 6:00pm	Appointment Sessions
10:00am	Visit of Honorable Secretary of Tourism Joseph Ace H. Durano
11:00am - 12:00nn	Forum: *"A Tourism Career"*
1:30pm - 3:00pm	Continuation of Forum: *"A Tourism Career"*
5:00pm - 6:00pm	Evaluation/Post Report
6:00pm	Exhibitors' Egress

Admission to the seminars is open to the public on a first come first served basis. For the complete schedule and updates, log on to www.tourismjobs.ph

DAVAO CITY
4 - 6 April 2006
NCCC Convention and Exhibition Centre, 4th Level (NCCC Mall)

3 April, Monday, Marco Polo Hotel
Mindanao Headhunters Meet Overseas Employers

9:00am - 10:00pm	Briefing of Overseas Employers
10:00am - 10:30	Coffee/Tea Break Exhibitors Registration & set-up
10:30am - 112:30	Business Sessions with Overseas Employers & Mindanao Headhunters
12:30pm - 17:00	Business Sessions with Overseas Employers & Mindanao Headhunters

4 April, Tuesday, Exhibition Hall, 4th Level, NCCC Mall
2.00pm Career in Tourism Industry Lecture: *"The Future of Employment in Tourism"*

4 April, Tuesday, NCCC, Activity Centre
Visit of Honorable Secretary of Tourism Joseph Ace H. Durano

5 April, Wednesday, Exhibition Hall, 4th Level, NCCC Mall
2.00pm Career in Tourism Industry Lecture: *"Tips on Oral Communications & Letter Writing"*

PEP Talks
4th Level, NCCC Mall

6 April, Thursday, Exhibition Hall, 4th Level, NCCC Mall
2.00pm Career in Tourism Industry Lecture: *"Personality Development"*

PEP Talks
4th Level, NCCC Mall

MANILA
6 – 8 April 2006
The Forum, Philippine International Convention Center

6 April, Thursday 8.00 am – 12.00 nn	Exhibitors' Registration and Ingress (to include test-run of software program)
1:00 pm – 6:00 pm	On-site Registration of Applicants Appointment Sessions *"Build a Career in Tourism"* Lectures: • Personality Development • Resume Writing & Making Good Job Interview Impression • *"Turning Point"* (Work Values/Orientation)
2:00 pm	Opening Ceremony Guest of Honor: Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo *President, Republic of the Philippines with the Honorable Secretary of Tourism* Joseph Ace H. Durano
7 April, Friday 9:00 am – 6:00 pm	On-site Registration of Applicants Appointment Sessions *"Build a Career in Tourism"* Lectures: • DOT & Tourism Industry Board Foundation Training Programs • Aviation/Maritime Industry Career • Tour Operations/Travel Agencies/Tour Guiding/Public Relations
8 April, Saturday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm	On-site Registration of Applicants Appointment Sessions *"Build a Career in Tourism"* Lectures: • Hotel/Resort/Spa/Conventions & Meetings/Exhibitions and Special Events Industries
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Evaluation / Post Report
6:00 pm	Exhibitors' Egress

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Ex-cop accused of rights abuses slain

COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS SHOT DEAD A RETIRED town police chief they accused of past human rights abuses and wounded a policeman and a militiaman in near simultaneous attacks, police said Sunday.

At least three New People's Army guerrillas got off a passenger van driven by Edwin Cornal, a former police chief of Milagros town in Masbate, and then shot him repeatedly, instantly killing him on Saturday, police said.

Passengers dashed out of the van in panic as shots rang out during the attack in Milagros, about 380 kilometers southeast of Manila, police Inspector Moises Jacobo told The Associated Press by telephone.

Cornal became a rebel target by leading successful counterinsurgency operations before retiring a few years ago. After retirement, he bought a passenger van and drove it to earn a living, Jacobo said.

In an almost simultaneous attack, about 60 guerrillas detonated three land mines in a village near Milagros, wounding one of six policemen on their way to check on a reported crime, Jacobo said.

A militiaman with the policemen was also wounded. Some of the policemen managed to return fire, wounding a number of guerrillas, he said.

Rebel spokesperson Gregorio Rosal claimed responsibility for both attacks, accusing Cornal of past human rights violations. He congratulated the guerrillas involved in the land mine attacks and said the rebels seized a machine gun, two assault rifles and a pistol from the six policemen.

The police and the NPA, however, had conflicting claims on the number of casualty in the ambush, with the NPA claiming two dead while the police saying there was only one, a civilian identified as Renato Rivera.

Land mines

Masbate police director said elements of the 506th Provincial Police Mobile Group were on the way to Milagros town to respond to the reported presence of armed men when they were ambushed by about 70 NPA members at Barangay San Juan, Mandaon town.

"They used land mines and they were in a more vantage position, but our men were able to hold their ground until reinforcements arrived, forcing the terrorists to withdraw after almost four hours of gunfight," he said.

The incident occurred while PNP chief Director General Arturo Lomibao was visiting the Bicol Regional Police Office in Legazpi City.

Alcovindas said he was then with Lomibao and all the chiefs of police of Masbate and had to rush back to Masbate to supervise the counter-offensive operation.

Masbate was the scene of another ambush late last year, which killed eight civilians and police personnel.

Rosal confirmed in a text message that NPA rebels ambushed a group of patrolling policemen, killing two of them in an ensuing firefight.

Rosal said the ambush also left an undetermined number of policemen injured.

He said the NPA also recovered a 30-cal. machine gun, an M16 rifle and a .45-cal. pistol from the policemen after the ambush.

Iloilo

In Iloilo City, a soldier was wounded after government troops clashed with suspected NPA guerrillas believed to be holding their anniversary celebration in Tapaz town in Capiz on Thursday.

Capt. Renante Besa, spokesperson of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division, identified the wounded soldier as Cpl. Raymond Kilayko, 24, from Hinigaran town in Negros Occidental.

Kilayko was being treated at the Western Visayas Medical Center in Iloilo City after he was hit in the chest with the bullet lodged in one of his ribs. Besa said Kilayko is in stable condition.

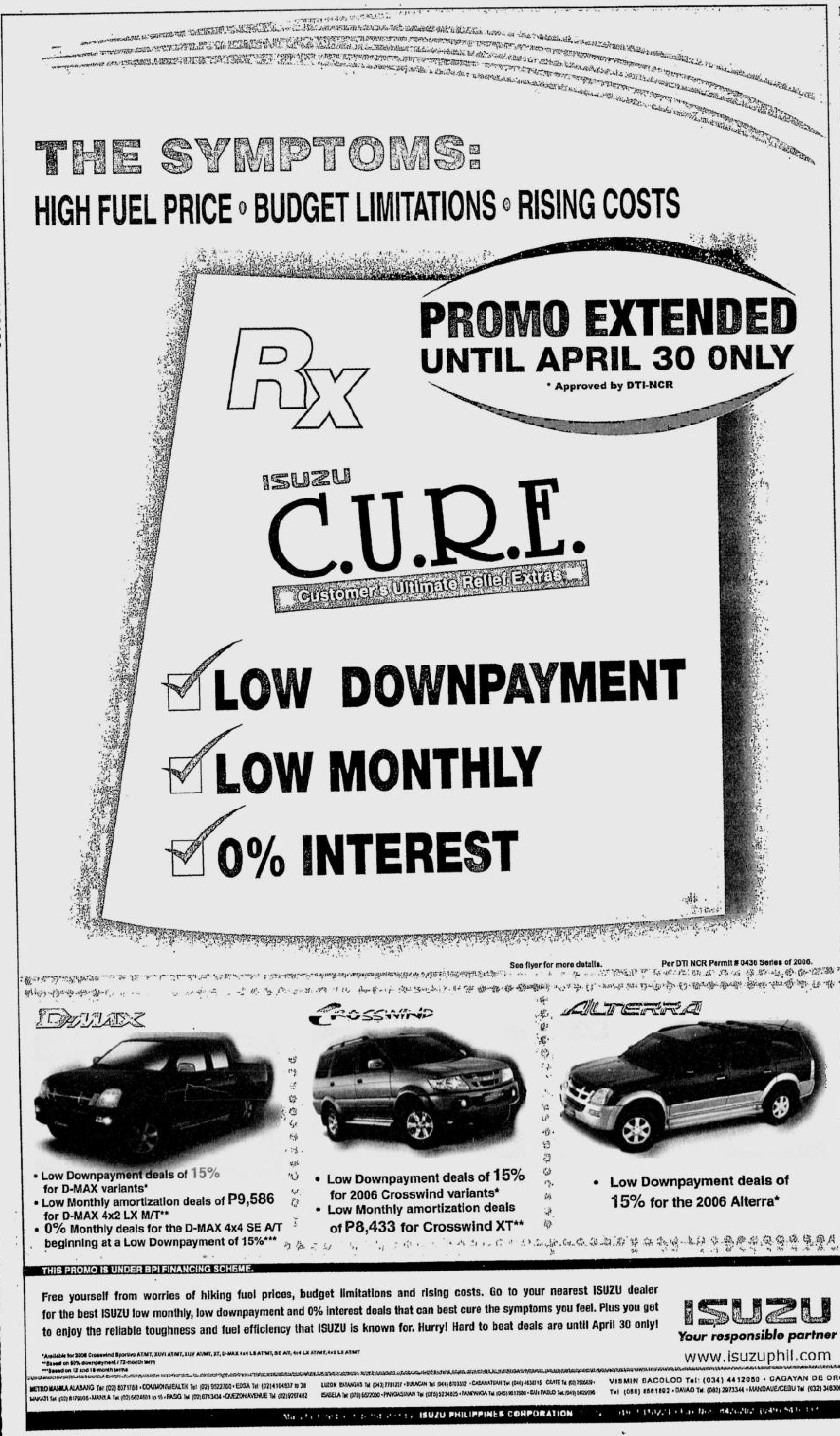
Kilayko was among troops of the 31st Scout Ranger Company under the 1st Scout Ranger Battalion that clashed with suspected NPA rebels around 3:45 p.m. in Barangay Acuña in Tapaz.

The government troops were investigating reports that a group of NPA rebels were in the area holding ceremonies for the NPA's 37th founding anniversary, which they commemorated on March 29.

The soldiers encountered around 30 rebels triggering a firefight that lasted from 15 to 25 minutes before the rebels retreated to the boundary of Tapaz and Calinog town in Iloilo, Besa said.

Citing reports from residents, Besa said at least one rebel was wounded in the clash. The rebels also left behind several backpacks containing personal belongings.

Besa said the rebels are under the Central Front Committee of the Panay Regional Party Committee. This is the same guerrilla unit that ambushed government troops in Calinog on Nov. 19 last year where nine soldiers were killed and 20 others were wounded after the rebels detonated two land mines and opened fire at the soldiers on board two trucks. *AP; Bobby Labalan and Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Nestor Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau*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6 crime gang members killed in Bataan clash

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—SIX MEMBERS of a robbery and gun-for-hire group were killed while two policemen were wounded in an hour-long gunfight in Orion, Bataan on Saturday, a police official said.

Chief Insp. Luisito Magnaye, Bataan police intelligence chief, said the operation against the Dacpano Gang came after the police got leads from two incidents on Friday night in which gang members killed two of their companions.

Magnaye said they caught up with gang members at Barangay Sabatan in Orion at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday. Killed in the gunfight were Mario Rago, Alicio Dacpano Jr., Abelardo Venegas, Jessie Magbag, Marvin Grotez and Christian Rago.

Four other suspects escaped, Magnaye said.

PO3 Danilo Nazareno and PO2 Noel Maglalang, and a civilian agent were wounded in the clash.

Police said the gang, allegedly led by Pablo Dacpano Jr., was behind the series of robberies and killings in Balanga City and the towns of Pilar, Orion, Limay, Mariveles, Morong and Bagac since last year.

On Friday, Magnaye said gang members killed their fellow members, cousins Bening Mabag and Peregrino Bubunao, supposedly after the two cheated on them over a deal.

Mabag and Bubunao were killed an hour apart in Sitio Damulag and Sibul, in the village of Daang Hari in Orion. *Tonette Orejas with a report from Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Arsonists stalk Bicol schools; same pattern seen

PILI, CAMARINES SUR—A SIMILAR arson pattern, which employs a plastic trash container set on fire under a pile of plastic chairs, was observed in the burning of a state college building here and an attempt to raze a state university in Legazpi City.

On March 20, the Teacher's Educational Institute Building of the Camarines Sur State Agricultural College (CSSAC) in Barangay San Jose burned down at lunch break. Nobody was reported hurt.

FO3 Tomas Sinfuego, fire investigator, said the arsonist escaped unnoticed and locked the doors of the building so that nobody could even try to put out the blaze.

Sinfuego said the fire had already crept to the ceiling and other portions of the building when the firefighters arrived.

Sinfuego said he had gathered evidence leading to a motive that might help investigators identify the arsonist.

The remains of a plastic trash container that the arsonist used to burn the building had been recovered, he said.

He said the container was full of plastic materials and crumpled paper, and set on fire under a pile of Monobloc chairs.

Sinfuego said that while the firefighters were busy putting out the fire, another fire started in a building several meters away.

Another plastic container filled with plastic materials and crumpled paper was found burning inside the toilet of the Research Building, he said.

Fortunately, the fire was put out in the nick of time, he said.

Dr. Yolanda Castroverde, assistant to the college president, said the CSSAC administration had asked police provincial director Senior Supt. Romeo Mapalo for the deployment of at least six police officers on campus.

She said the school had only 15 security guards and seven are on duty at any given time to secure the vast campus. The buildings are far apart and there are trees between them.

Castroverde said she called a meeting of all department heads and personnel, and members of the student council to discuss security matters.

She said she was surprised to find out on Wednesday from Bicol University officials that the same arson pattern had been employed when one of the buildings was set on fire sometime in January.

Castroverde said the BU officials had told her that a plastic trash container under Monobloc chairs had also been set on fire, but that the fire was easily controlled because of the high ceiling and the concrete materials used in the building.

She said the CSSAC officials had experienced a series of arson incidents this year. The first happened at the Graduate School Building on Feb. 20 but it was put out before the flames could spread to the ceiling, she said. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Army forces attack NPA bases in Quezon, Bicol

LUCENA CITY—THE ANNIVERSARY celebration of the New People's Army rebels in Quezon and Bicol last week was spoiled after government forces attacked two major rebel camps, leaving behind five communist insurgents and one Army soldier dead, according to Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay Jr., chief of the Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar here.

Cabuay said the first attack occurred in Barangay Patalunan in Lupi, Camarines Sur on Wedneday, the NPA's 37th founding anniversary.

"The camp was supposed to be the site of the NPA's anniversary celebration of the CPP-Bicol Regional Party Committee but we spoiled their party," he said.

Soldiers from the Army's 31st Infantry Battalion killed five NPA rebels in the two-day running gunbattle, he said.

The government forces recovered five M16 rifles, one carbine, several rounds of ammunitions, personal belongings and antigovernment documents that revealed the communist operations in Camarines Sur.

No casualties were reported on the government side.

On Thursday, Army soldiers also discovered a big NPA camp in the Sierra Madre mountain ranges in Cagsiay 3, Mauban, Quezon.

A military report said the camp was being occupied by close to 100 NPA guerrillas and allied civilians, who were preparing to hold a belated anniversary feast, when surprised by government forces.

An Army soldier identified as Corporal Edgar Astarez was killed in the initial assault, the report added.

"Our successful attack on their camps was a moral defeat for the terrorist group. Despite the swaggering of the CPP leadership that the NPA will stage heightened offensives, what happened was that we spoiled their anniversary celebration," Cabuay said.

Government forces also recovered motorcycle, several pieces of improvised land mine, 20 pieces of live ammunition for a 50-cal. machinegun, assorted military uniforms, assorted medicines, sacks of rice and grocery foodstuffs.

Cabuay said that a week before the NPA anniversary, government forces also engaged communist guerrillas in a fierce encounter in the boundary of Tayabas and Mauban towns.

He said the Army soldiers captured six suspected communist rebels, including two minors aged 14 and 17, and seized six high-powered firearms.

"The capture of the two fully-armed minors in an NPA band has belied the CPP claim that they don't recruit youngsters. The two teens should not be in the company of a terrorist group. Their right place is supposed to be inside a school," Cabuay lamented.

He said the military immediately turned over the captured youngsters to the custody of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Owwa probes report of Pinoy torture in Saudi

COTABATO CITY—THE OVERseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) in Central Mindanao is investigating the alleged "torture" of a Filipino worker and the death of another in the hands of their employers in Saudi Arabia.

The two Filipino domestic helpers, whose names were withheld pending outcome of the joint probe by the Philippine Embassy, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Owwa are from Surallah, South Cotabato and President Quirino town in Sultan Kudarat.

The Surallah OFW, who is now in a Manila hospital, showed signs of torture with burns all over her body, said Owwa regional director Abdulgani Omag, whose office is preparing to file charges against the victim's Saudi employer, whose name he requested to withhold.

Based on the photos sent to the Owwa regional office here by the victim's parents, Omag said, "the act was inhuman and barbaric."

He was told that the cruel treatment sparked from alleged "jealousy" by the employer's wife and children to their Filipina helper.

The wife allegedly poured boiling water on the OFW's breast down to her private parts while her hands and legs were bound, Omag said.

At times, according to Omag, a hot spoon was pressed on the Filipina's back.

Another Owwa case of concern was the death of a woman from President Quirino town in a vehicular accident in Saudi Arabia.

"There seems to have an inconsistency on the victim's death," noted Omag, who suspected this to be the cause of the delay in bringing back the victim's remains to the Philippines.

DFA records show that the domestic helper died on Feb. 24 while the Philippine Embassy in Saudi Arabia said it was on March 3.

"We are trying to verify this inconsistency," Omag said. *Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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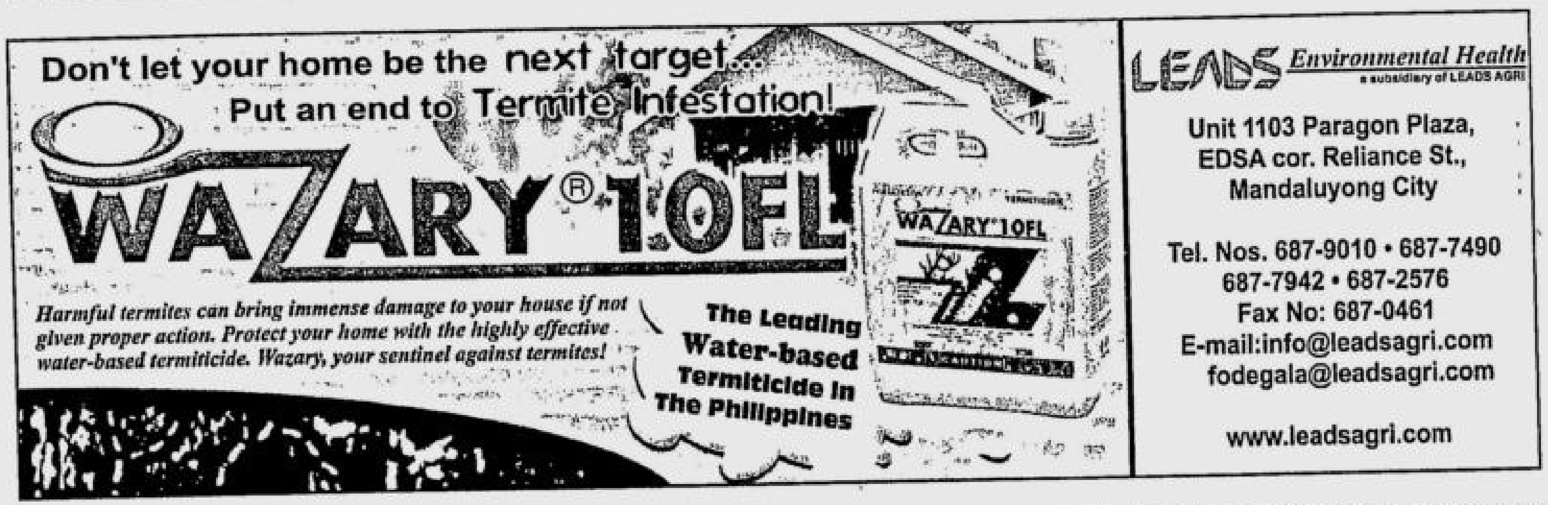
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Delay in case of slain Aklan radioman scored

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

KALIBO, AKLAN—JUSTICE REMAINS elusive for Aklan broadcaster Herson "Boy" Hinolan as his murder case suffered another delay on Friday in the Aklan Regional Trial Court.

Judge Ledelia Aragona-Biliran, presiding judge of RTC Branch 2, granted the petition of the defense to cancel Friday's hearing and ordered in open court the suspension of proceedings for 60 days or until further notice by the court.

In calling for a suspension, Biliran cited the pending petition for review filed by the defense before the Court of Appeals, questioning her order to the provincial prosecutor's office to reinvestigate the case against Mayor Alfredo "Fred" Arcenio of Lezon town.

Arcenio was earlier charged with homicide for Hinolan's killing, but after a reinvestigation, the Regional State Prosecutor's Office amended the charge to murder.

The hearing was supposed to resolve the issue of whether the court should admit the amended information against Arcenio.

In its petition, the defense asked the CA to set aside Biliran's order to reinvestigate the case and to arraign Arcenio on the homicide charge.

It also asked Biliran to inhibit herself from the case, citing her submission of a comment to the CA which "show(s) that she was arguing actually for the prosecution."

Biliran said she would rule on the motion for inhibition after the two parties submitted their comments.

The lawyer and family of Hinolan lamented the delay in the proceedings.

"These are just delaying tactics [of the defense]," Hinolan's widow Aphrodite told the INQUIRER.

Her son Kim, 12, Hinolan's 68-year-old mother Sonia, and other relatives at the courtroom accompanied Aphrodite, who was dressed in black. Several family members wept as the judge ordered the postponement of proceedings.

"It is taking too long and slow, but I believe the truth will prevail," said Sonia.

Arcenio, who is out on bail, did not attend the hearing.

Witnesses have tagged Arcenio as the lone gunman who repeatedly shot Hinolan on Nov. 13, 2004 while the broadcaster was urinating near a carnival in the capital town of Kalibo, Aklan. He died two days later from at least seven bullet wounds.

Hinolan was station manager of dyIN Bombo Radyo in Kalibo and hosted the station's morning program "Bombohanay Bigtime."

He was among the 13 journalists killed in 2004 and one of the 73 murdered since 1986. Most of the cases are unsolved.

A witness claimed to have overheard an aide of the mayor talking about the plan to kill the broadcaster.

Arcenio has denied the accusations, saying he was in Lezo, 10 km from Kalibo, when Hinolan was shot.

The witnesses are under the Witness Protection Program of the Department of Justice, but private prosecutor Napoleon Oducado said their families were vulnerable to pressure so long as Arcenio was out on bail.

"He is a mayor and he can use his influence to exert pressure on relatives of the witnesses," said Oducado.

Army chided for linking paper's revival to Reds

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—CITING INtelligence reports, the top military officer in Negros Occidental has claimed that a city-based newspaper that closed down in 2004 was being revived as a propaganda tool of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army.

Col. Jerry Jalandoni, 303rd Infantry Brigade commander, linked the Visayas Daily Courier to the CPP-NPA propaganda during a meeting of the Provincial Peace and Order Council on Tuesday at the provincial capitol here.

He admitted that the information was based on intelligence reports that still needed to be validated, but he pointed out that the Communist Party had been reported to be stepping up its political propaganda organizing efforts.

Publisher speaks up

Edgar Cadagat, publisher of the Courier, denied that the paper was going to be revived. This would entail millions of pesos in investments that he did not have, he said.

He, however, stressed that the deeper implication of this report was that military authorities were intervening in areas where, he claimed, they had no competency.

"The right and the freedom to publish, to inform the people of what's happening in society, including government corruption, abuses and human rights violations fall under Article 3, Section 4 of the Constitution," Cadagat said.

"This intervention in the work of the Negros media is uncalled for, this is the essential implication of the military report to the Peace and Order Council," he said.

Cadagat said he did not know where the military supposedly obtained its report. He said there was really no plan at all to revive the Courier.

GMA adviser

He said he could not also understand why a community newspaper, like the Courier, was being linked to the CPP-NPA as the investors in the paper before it folded up included several government officials. He declined to name the officials.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's adviser for Western Visayas, Rafael Coscolluela, in a separate interview, criticized the military for targeting local journalists.

He said the warning about the Courier sounded "a little paranoid."

Order of Battle

Last week, the military placed in its "order of battle" Julius Mariveles, news director of dyEZ Aksyon Radyo-Bacolod, for being an alleged member of the CPP-NPA.

Mariveles and local media groups have condemned his name's inclusion in the military watch list and demanded that it be stricken off.

In a statement, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines condemned as "most irresponsible" and "the height of ignorance" the allegations made by Jalandoni.

"Jalandoni should review his information before issuing statements that could endanger the lives of innocent people," said Jose Torres Jr., chair of the NUJP's Commission for the Protection of Journalists.

"We demand that Jalandoni retract his statement in public and apologize to Cadagat," Torres said.

TOBACCO FESTIVAL
The dancers of San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte show their winning form during the tobacco festival street dancing competition in Candon City, Ilocos Sur. LEONCIO BALBIN JR/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

SC may resolve media suit soon

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE SUPREME COURT may soon be able to resolve a suit filed by media practitioners questioning Presidential Proclamation 1017, Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez said here on Saturday.

Gutierrez said the High Court would hold its next session in Baguio City starting April 10. By May 5, she said, it might be able to resolve the issue brought up against President Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration of a state of national emergency.

Malacañang has used the declaration to clamp down on those allegedly plotting to overthrow the government, including some media personalities.

"The media is also our concern, we just want to inform you that we are doing our best, the media [think] as if we are not acting," Gutierrez said.

She said that during the session in Baguio, the Supreme Court would also try to resolve the case filed against the so-called Batasan 5 and the protest against Executive Order 464.

"Batasan 5" is composed of militant party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo, Joel Virador, Rafael Mariano, Liza Maza and Teodoro Casiño, who are facing arrest on rebellion charges. They have sought refuge at the Batasang Pambansa Complex.

EO 464 prevents government officials from testifying in congressional hearings without prior approval from Malacañang.

"These cases are our main consideration at present, but soon, we will be promulgating our decision," Gutierrez said. *Julie Alipala, PDI M. Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Barangay chief, pa slain

QUEZON, Isabela—A barangay leader in Tabuk, Kalinga and his father were killed in an ambush on March 30, police said. Gabriel Lumbican, 38, chair of Barangay Calanan, and his father Theodore, 69, were on board their Isuzu Elf truck when unidentified men with 9-mm pistols emerged from a forested area along F.F. Cruz Street here at about 3 p.m. and shot them. Police have yet to establish the motive for the attack.

Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Murder probe pressed

CITY OF MALOLOS—The Provincial Board Members League of the Philippines has asked the Department of Interior and Local Government and police authorities to hasten the investigation of the gun-slaying of one of its members in Occidental Mindoro on March 24. Vincent Piccio III, PBMLP president and Antique board member, said the league issued a resolution condemning the killing of Bulacan Board Member Warlito Trinidad, allegedly by communist rebels. Piccio represented the league during necrological service for Trinidad at the provincial capitol on Friday. Trinidad's group was attacked after it finished inspecting a mining site in Sta. Cruz, Occidental Mindoro.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Extort gang member killed

BATANGAS CITY—A suspected member of an extortion syndicate preying on overseas Filipino workers was killed while another was arrested in an entrapment operation in Padre Garcia, Batangas on Wednesday. Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa, director of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, identified the slain suspect as Eugenio Gatdula, 45. Arrested was Gil Bolaños, 37. Verzosa said that even during his stint as chief of the Calabarzon police, police had been watching Gatdula's group, which extorted money from OFWs by threatening to kidnap them or their relatives.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Dive boat runs aground

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—A dive boat ran aground off one of the islets of the Tubbataha Reef, a protected area and one of two World Heritage Sites in Palawan, on March 27. The Explorer Fleet, owned by a certain John Wy, was on its way to a dive site when it hit a shallow portion of the reef. Angelique Songco, manager of the Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park, said the extent of damage had yet to be determined as the boat was still stuck at the south islet of the reef. Last year, the Greenpeace flagship Rainbow Warrior ran aground in the area and paid a fine for the destroyed coral reefs.

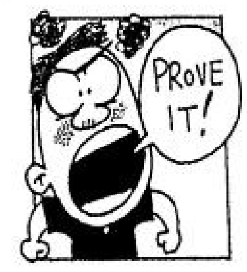
Geraldford Ticke, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

2 NPA guerrillas killed

CAMP NAKAR, Lucena City—Army soldiers killed two more suspected New People's Army rebels in Lupi, Camarines Sur on Thursday, the Army said. Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay Jr., Southern Luzon Command chief, said troops of the Army's 31st Infantry Battalion caught up with the rebels in Barangay Patalunan. The day before, the military unit clashed with about 40 rebels, killing three of them. Bad weather, however, prevented the soldiers from getting air support, said Cabuay.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Ex-PNP chief cries foul



ROXAS CITY—Metro Rail Transit General Manager Roberto Lastimoso has challenged Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson to prove that he received "jueteng" money when the former was then Philippine National Police chief. Lastimoso said Lacson, who succeeded him as PNP chief, was dishing out "packs of lies" when he testified at the plunder trial of ousted President Joseph Estrada on March 22. Lacson said he informed Estrada a day before he was appointed PNP chief in November 1999 that he would not accept the P5 million in "jueteng" money that Lastimoso was allegedly getting monthly. *Felipe Celino, PDI Visayas Bureau*

From lawyers to judges

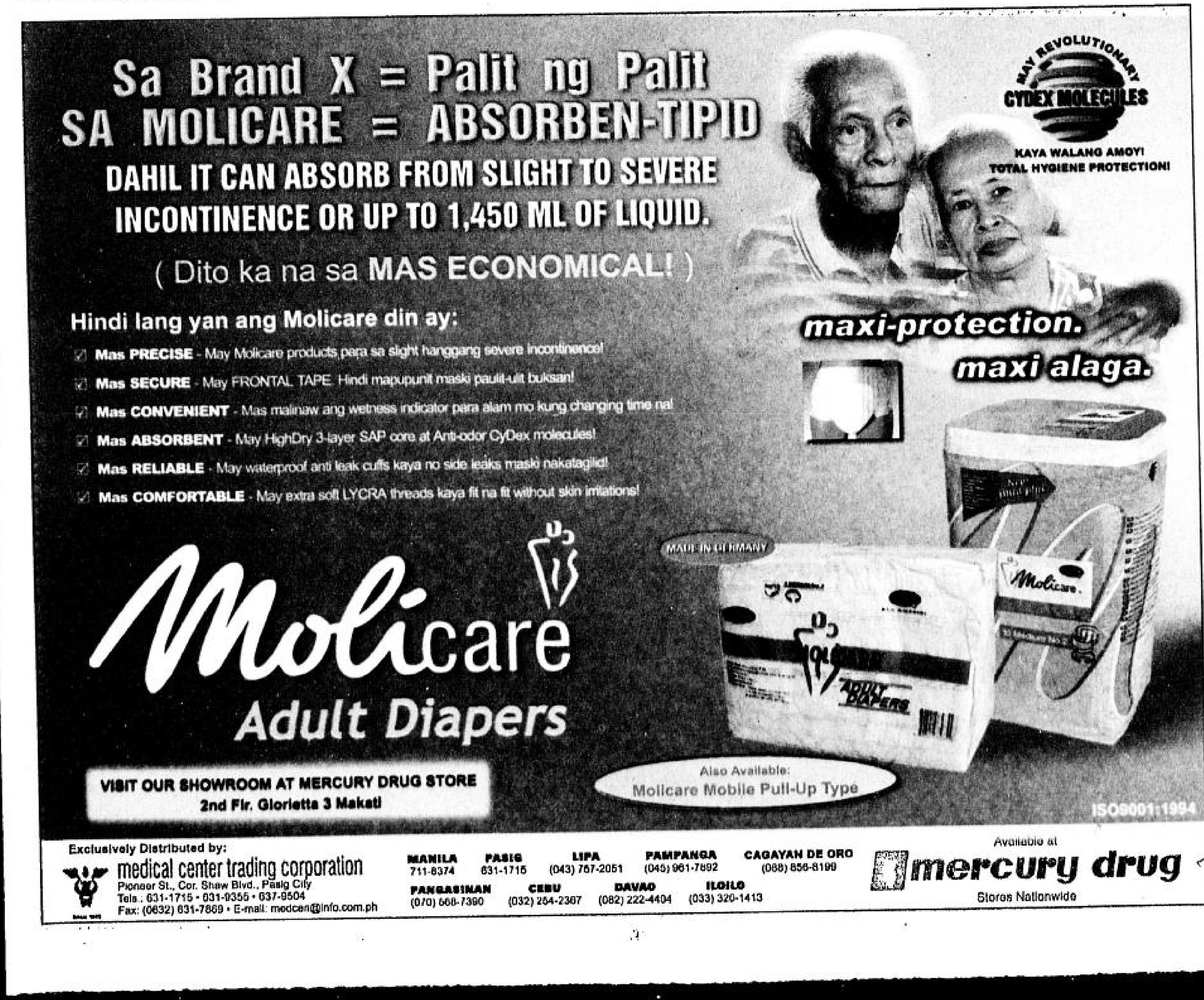
COTABATO CITY—The Supreme Court has appointed three government lawyers Municipal Circuit Trial Court judges in North Cotabato. Gov. Emmanuel Piñol welcomed the designation of Arvin Balagot, Hemelinda Diaz and Jose Tabosares as MCTC judges for Kabacan, Magpet and President Roxas towns, respectively. The three courts were previously under the judicial care of Makilala MCTC Judge Vicente Mondragon. The new judges are set to assume office in July after their formal training on matters affecting their judicial function in Manila starting this month. Piñol said the three, who were members of the Kidapawan City Public Attorneys Office, would be the answer to the provincial government's desire to fill up the MCTC posts and ease their case backlogs.

Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

3 NPA rebels surrender

MAKILALA, North Cotabato—Three communist guerrillas turned themselves in to military authorities Thursday. Maj. Gamal Hayudini, Southern Command information officer, quoted the rebels as saying they got tired of fighting. They were identified as Raul Castro, Augusto Santos Jr. and Abelardo Balaba, who claimed to be members of the NPA's Southern Mindanao Regional Party Committee. They are now undergoing debriefing at the headquarters of the Army's 37th Infantry Battalion based here.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau



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FAMILY AFFAIR
Mang Salvador and his young daughter look for a shellfish called "balakwit" to cook at their home in Del Gallego, Camarines Sur.
LYN RILLON

20 customs district officials reshuffled

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—TWENTY TOP DISTRICT OFFICIALS of the Bureau of Customs nationwide have been reshuffled Friday on orders of acting Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales.

Morales, through Customs Personnel Order (CPO) 169-2006 issued March 31, said the reassignments were made in the interest of the service.

"This order shall take effect immediately and shall last until revoked," he said in his order.

Customs-Cebu head Ma. Lourdes Mangaoang has been reassigned as acting district collector in the port of Iloilo. She will be replaced by acting district collector Grace Caringal, who is coming from the Subic Port.

The other officials affected in the revamp are:

- Acting collector Edward Baltazar of San Fernando Port, who has been reassigned to Manila.
- Enrico Turingan, officer in-charge of the Batangas Port, who was named chief of staff at the Office of the District Collector of the Manila International Container Port (MICP).
- Rene Benavidez, acting district collector of Legazpi City, who was named acting deputy collector for assessment in the Batangas Port.
- Dennis Azarraga, acting district collector of Iloilo, who will assume the same post in Legazpi.
- Acting district collector Roberto Sacramento of Cagayan de Oro City, who was reassigned to the port of San Fernando.
- Tomas Alcid, acting director of Zamboanga Port, who was reassigned to Batangas.
- Marieta Zamoranos, acting deputy collector for operations in the MICP, who was named acting district collector of the Subic Port.
- Rodolfo Campos, from the Customs' Intelligence and Enforcement Group, who will be acting district collector of the Zamboanga Port.
- Napoleon Gatmaytan, acting district collector of North Harbor, who was reassigned as acting deputy collector for operations in the MICP.
- Nelson Olalo, acting Customs assistant chief at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia), who was reassigned to North Harbor.
- Remedios Espinosa, acting deputy collector for assessment at the MICP, who is reassigned as acting deputy collector for assessment at the Naia.
- Priscilla Bauzon, head of the Manila Port, who was reassigned as acting deputy collector for assessment in MICP.
- Rogelio Villagarcia, acting chief of the Bonds Division of the Manila Port, who will be acting deputy collector assessment of the same port.
- Rafael Crisol Jr. from the Office of the Commissioner, to acting chief of the Bonds Division of the Manila Port.
- Gerardo Gonzales, who heads the Davao Port, was reassigned to the Customs Postal Office of the Manila Port.
- Macabantug Mandangan, acting collector of the Manila Port's Customs Postal office, who will take over as acting deputy collector for assessment in Davao.
- Ali Usman, acting Deputy collector for operations in Cagayan de Oro City, will be Officer-in-charge and concurrent acting deputy collector for operations in Cagayan de Oro.
- Melita del Rosario, acting assessment chief of the Manila Port, who was reassigned to the same post in Metro Manila.

In Cebu, Mangaoang had questioned the acting Customs chief's order, saying it lacked the signature of Finance Secretary Margarito Teves.

Ricky Gantuangco, executive vice president of the Professional Customs Brokers Association of the Philippines (Visayas-Mindanao chapter), said their organization would release a manifesto in support of Mangaoang's continued stay in Cebu.

Gantuangco said his group agreed with Mangaoang that the order was unofficial and unlawful. Based on Executive Order 133 issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo in January, any movement at the BOC would need the approval of Teves, he said.

Mangaoang has refused to answer media calls since Saturday.

Allan Suarez, president of PhilExport, said his group was still deciding if they would issue a manifesto of support for Mangaoang, particularly since the movement within the bureau was purely an internal matter.

Before the revamp was ordered, talks had been circulating that Mangaoang would be replaced because she failed to meet the BOC-Cebu's collection target last year.

Mangaoang had said that while she failed to meet the target, she still had the highest collection compared to other ports in the country.

She earlier cited political instability in the country as the reason for the drop in exports and imports, which, she added, also dragged down customs collections.

Army exec mediates radio station dispute

KABACAN, NORTH COTABATO—An Army colonel interceded to end a mayor's move to clamp down a radio station by bringing the contending parties to a dialogue on Saturday.

"It was an opportune time for both parties to reflect and consider paramount the interest and welfare of the people in the name of peace and reconciliation," said Col. Ruperto Pabustan, commander of the 602nd Infantry Brigade.

In a media get-together hosted by Pabustan in celebrating his 51st birthday at Camp Lucero in Carmen, North Cotabato, the military officer took time to resolve the rift between Kabacan Mayor Luzviminda Tan and 101.7 FM Station Manager Eddie Tenizo Jr. in a brief closed-door meeting.

Tenizo said the final decision would come from Manila Broadcasting Corp. (MBC), of which the embroiled Kabacan-based radio outfit is attached to.

Tan, on the other hand, left the matter to her lawyers to decide. She earlier complained that the station had been "unfair" in its commentaries on her governance, and asked the National Telecommunications Commission to have the radio station closed.

Tenizo said the controversy began March 10 when Kabacan police stormed the radio station and ordered it closed unless a "permit to operate" and other related documents were made available to the mayor's office.

"We had been out of the air waves for two days (March 11-12) because of the harassment," said the station's news anchor Boy Ancheta.

He said their absence elicited complaints from advertisers, which, he added, made the municipal government liable for damages.

Tan, in her March 14 letter to Tenizo, noted that the station has had a business permit to operate. "However, we just want to verify" if it has NTC registration papers.

A week later, the mayor's administrative officer, Cecilia Facurib, wrote Tenizo to ask what was holding them from closing down. "You have not still suspended the airing of your radio station in spite of the verbal request" of the mayor, she said.

Tenizo said the management had been ordered to provide the mayor's office "original or machine copies" of the congressional franchise, permits to operate, to purchase or posses broadcast equipment, to construct tower antenna and duly signed business permit.

The documents, according to Facurib, "should be properly authenticated or certified true copy by the NTC."

"We advise you to comply with the said legal requirements for your legitimacy," she said.

Acknowledging the importance of the print and broadcast media in community development, Pabustan urged local governments and media practitioners to work for the common good despite their differences.

"A negotiating table for contending parties to come to terms is still the best option and I'm glad both yielded making my birthday bash more memorable," he said. *Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

DENR scraps laws biased against married women

COTABATO CITY—THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources has started reviewing its rules, regulations and procedures and scrapped laws it believed are biased against married women.

This as the DENR issued Department Administrative Order No. 13 as a measure of removing gender bias in all its rules, regulations and procedures in the ownership of the land.

Scrapped was the 66-year-old prohibition among married women to apply for homestead patent, except in some cases, according to DENR regional director Jim Sampulna.

Equal rights

"As such, women, regardless of civil status, can now enjoy equal rights as men in the filing, acceptance, processing and approval of public land application," he said in a statement.

Section 12 of the Public Land Act, otherwise known as Commonwealth Act No. 141, provides that if the applicant of a homestead patent is a woman, she should not be married. However, a married woman can apply for homestead if she satisfies any of the following conditions: (1) she is living separately from her husband and does not depend on him for support; (2) her husband is insane or physically incapacitated, and; (3) if her husband is in prison serving a term of such duration as would prevent him from complying with the requirement of the homestead law regarding residence.

Quality of living

"The bottom line here is to help improve the women's quality of living at the same time empowering them to become better partners of men toward development," he said.

Records made available by engineer Mama Samaon, Land Management Division chief in Koronadal City, show 66 homestead applications received and approved by his office.

Of this number, only 11 applicants are women. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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GMA now flies 'new, refurbished' Cha-cha plane

By Christine O. Avendaño

FROM A TRAIN TO A PLANE ride.

First, she likened the ongoing moves to revise the Constitution to a train, which could run over opponents if they didn't stand back.

Now, President Macapagal-Arroyo has likened Charter change to a "new aircraft, refurbished and overhauled for the long flight of the new century."

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday this was what the President said in her remarks at the 10th anniversary celebration of Asian Spirit airlines on Friday.

"Charter change, according to the President, is a move she embraces not out of any personal agenda, but because our country deserves a system that will allow us to join the ranks of First World nations in 20 years," Bunye said in his "View from the Palace" column.

"What we need, the President believes, is a new Constitution, firmly grounded in the center with no more pressures from the extreme ends of the political spectrum," Bunye said.

Ms Arroyo last week endorsed the ongoing signature drive or people's initiative to amend the Constitution.

Unlike the administration, the opposition has not offered an alternative to reforming the political system, according to Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor.

The political system has been the problem since the administration of Corazon Aquino, Defensor said. It was also the reason the country took two years to bounce back from the financial crisis that hit Asia in 1997, he said.

"I think they (opposition) have failed miserably in presenting an alternative," Defensor said in a phone interview.

The opposition, he said, had only been resorting to hurling criticisms against the government and it did not even have a "bicycle" to offer.

Told that some members of the opposition were now calling for snap elections, he said that he did not find such a response "well-studied."

"It will just change the person and not the system," Defensor said.

He wondered why militant groups, such as Sanlakas and Akbayan, were opposed to joining the Charter change debate when they had been espousing a change in the system of government.

But today, these groups are saying that the present political system "should not be reformed," he said.

Defensor reiterated the Palace call for the opposition to join efforts to reform the political system through Charter change.

He said his "gut feel" was that the opposition was "quietly for (Charter change)" because it had so far been opposing the people's initiative "all in the realm of the media."

He said that those opposing the signature drive had favored Charter change before.

"They know that beyond politics, this is what is needed," Defensor said.

Gabriel Claudio, the President's adviser for political affairs, challenged the opposition to "put their money where their mouth is and file a case in court."

He said the opposition had been harassing those behind the signature drive and the Commission on Elections "with all sorts of threats and innuendos about its validity and authenticity."

Abalos tells critics of Cha-cha: Go to SC

From page A1

ers (43.5 million as of 2004) and at least 3 percent of every congressional district's registered voters.

Sigaw ng Bayan and Ulap are gathering signatures for the petition bearing the proposition:

"Do you approve of the amendment of Articles VI and VII of the 1987 Constitution, changing the form of government from the present bicameral-presidential to a unicameral-parliamentary system of government, in order to achieve greater efficiency, simplicity and economy in government and providing an Article VIII as transitory provisions for the orderly shift from one system to another?"

Petition for prohibition

Drilon said the Senate would have no recourse but to file a petition for prohibition with the high tribunal if the Comelec and its registrars in the cities and municipalities verified the signatures despite the lack of an enabling law.

"The Supreme Court has already ruled that there's no law and has issued a permanent injunction against the Comelec [from entertaining any petition]. Any activity contrary to that could expose the Comelec to contempt," he said.

Speaker Jose de Venecia said that the proponents of Cha-cha would press ahead with a people's initiative until the Supreme Court rules with finality on the issue.

On Friday, President Macapagal-Arroyo endorsed the signature campaign to change the Constitution.

"The old-time politicians of the status quo better stand back because this train has left the station. It is time for politicians to stand back or get run over," Ms Arroyo had said.

De Venecia said that the verification of the signatures would be completed by April 15 and a plebiscite would be scheduled in June to ratify the shift to a parliamentary form of government.

He said an "interim parliament," to be composed of the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, would be convened as early as July to continue the process of amending the Constitution.

Inadequate

In its March 1997 decision on the Santiago v Comelec case, the high tribunal ruled that Republic Act No. 6735 (the Initiative and Referendum Act) was inadequate to cover a people's initiative to amend the Constitution.

The Supreme Court also declared that the Comelec was "permanently enjoined" from entertaining any such petition until a "sufficient law" had been enacted to implement such a system.

Citing the ruling, Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Joker Arroyo said Comelec officials faced contempt should they push through with the verification process.

Senator Arroyo said that the Supreme Court should stop the Comelec from undertaking the process, and that Abalos and the commissioners should be ordered to explain their actions.

Abalos had given the local registrars the go-signal to verify the signatures despite the Supreme Court ruling.

He and other commissioners had argued that the high court decision allowed the agency to prepare the forms for such an initiative, provide the statistics, set up signing stations and verify the signatures of the voters who signed the petition.

'Initiatory step'

They said they were merely performing an administrative function.

Abalos maintained that the verification of signatures was just an "initiatory step" and was not disallowed by the Supreme Court ruling.

He said what the Comelec was enjoined from doing was taking cognizance of a petition for an initiative on Charter change.

"For all we know, the gathering of signatures may not prosper. They may not get enough. Or they may lose interest," Abalos said.

Sigaw ng Bayan had claimed that it had gathered more than 6 million signatures and exceeded the 12-percent requirement.

The Senate will file the petition once the Comelec en banc issues an official order for the verification of the signatures and the local registrars start the verification process, according to Pimentel.

"Once they make a move in an official and definite manner, [then we can file the petition]," he said in an interview.

For now, there was no basis to file the petition, the senator said.

"Theoretically, Abalos can be cited for contempt. But even that is a little problematic because [if he's brought to court], he can always take back what he said about the verification," he added.

Adherence to precedence

This early, Drilon voiced confidence that the high court, with two justices who had dissented from the 1997 ruling still sitting on the bench, would not reverse itself if the Santiago v Comelec case were challenged.

"The stability of the decision of the court lies in your adherence to precedence. This is a precedent," the Senate President said, referring to the high court's 1997 decision.

Joining the Senate in opposing the signature drive, a militant group urged the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) to exert its moral influence on the nation and stand up against the "maneuvers of Malacañang" to revise the Constitution.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan appealed to the CBCP to open the parishes all over the country to people's organizations conducting an anti-Charter change campaign.

"Ms Arroyo is hell-bent on pushing Cha-cha despite serious legal and moral questions. The administration is trying to co-opt the barangays. Hopefully, they will not be able to co-opt the parishes," said Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. in a statement.

Bishop Arguelles

A senior Catholic bishop has added his voice to those against the administration-backed people's initiative.

Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles said it looked to him like the effort was being "used by the politicians for their own selfish purposes."

"That shouldn't be. A people's initiative should be for the good of all," he told reporters Saturday after concelebrating the first Mass of Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales as a member of the College of Cardinals at the Manila Cathedral.

Arguelles, a former military ordinary (meaning a bishop of priests assigned to the police and military), reminded the public that a people's initiative should be "for the people, not for politicians."

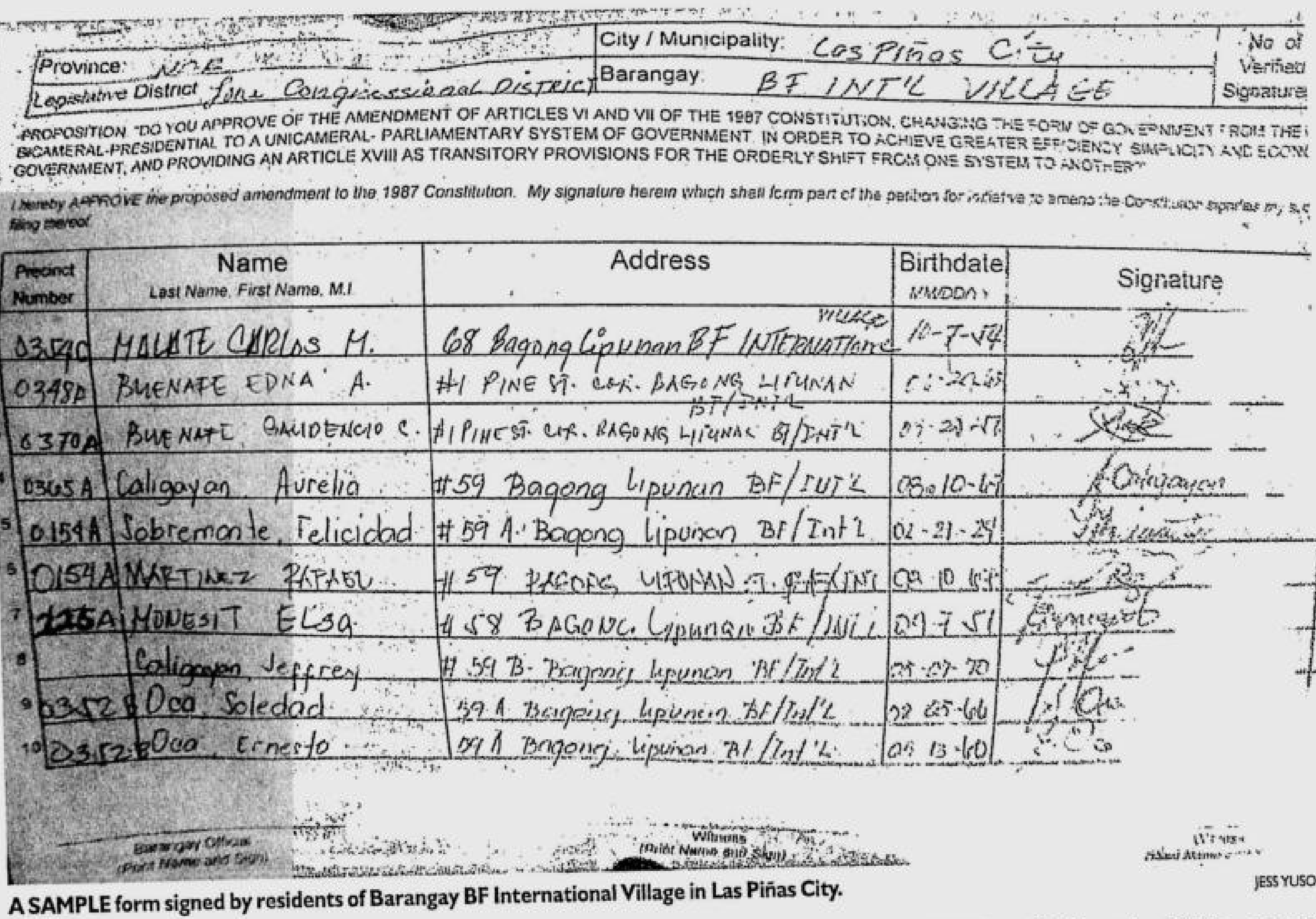
The senators themselves are planning to bring their battle against what they called a "bogus" people's initiative from the chamber's session hall to city and municipal halls in the countryside.

"There are plans to bring the issue nationwide through a political action of the Senate as a whole," Pimentel said.

The idea is to enlighten the public that the ongoing people's initiative is "legally infirm" and "constitutionally deficient," he said.

"We will discuss the issues more deeply before the public, and if necessary we will denounce the drive. We will speak at public forums," the senator said.

Putting themselves on a collision course with Malacañang, 21 senators last week adopted a resolution declaring as illegal the campaign to gather signatures in support of Charter change through the barangay assemblies initiated by the Department of the Interior and Local Government. *With reports from Blanche S. Rivera and Christian V. Esguerra*



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City / Municipality: Las Piñas City

Barangay: BF INT'L VILLAGE

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PROPOSITION "DO YOU APPROVE OF THE AMENDMENT OF ARTICLES VI AND VII OF THE 1987 CONSTITUTION, CHANGING THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT FROM THE BICAMERAL-PRESIDENTIAL TO A UNICAMERAL- PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE GREATER EFFICIENCY, SIMPLICITY AND ECON GOVERNMENT, AND PROVIDING AN ARTICLE XVIII AS TRANSITORY PROVISIONS FOR THE ORDERLY SHIFT FROM ONE SYSTEM TO ANOTHER?"

I hereby APPROVE the proposed amendment to the 1987 Constitution. My signature herein which shall form part of the petition for initiative to amend the Constitution signifies my s filing thereof.

	Precinct Number	Name Last Name, First Name, M.I	Address	Birthdate MMDDYY	Signature
	03540	MALATE CARLOS M.	68 Bagong Lipunan BF INTERNATIONAL VILLAGE	10-7-54	
	0348A	BUENAFE EDNA A.	#1 PINE ST. COR. BAGONG LIPUNAN BT/INT'L	[illegible]	
3	0370A	BUENAFE GAUDENCIO C.	#1 PINE ST. COR. BAGONG LIPUNAN BT/INT'L	09-29-47	
4	0365A	Caligayan Aurelia	#59 Bagong Lipunan BF/INT'L	08-10-45	A. Caligayan
5	0154A	Sobremonte, Felicidad	#59 A. Bagong Lipunan BF/Int'l	02-21-29	
6	0154A	MARTINEZ RAFAEL	#59 BAGONG LIPUNAN BF/INT'L	09 10 53	
7	~~225~~A	MONESIT ELSA	#58 BAGONG Lipunan BF/INT'L	09-7-51	
8		Caligayan Jeffrey	#59 B. Bagong Lipunan BF/Int'l	25-07-70	
9	03528	Oca, Soledad	59 A Bagong Lipunan BF/Int'l	12 25-66	
10	03528	Oca, Ernesto	59 A Bagong Lipunan BF/Int'l	09 13-60	

Barangay Official (Print Name and Sign)

Witness (Print Name and Sign)

Witness (Print Name and Sign)

A SAMPLE form signed by residents of Barangay BF International Village in Las Piñas City. JESS YUSON

A RESIDENT of Barangay BF International Village signs up for a "people's initiative" to amend the Charter. JESS YUSON

Firms seek rules on new power scheme

From page A1

need to know the total cost to us," Dee said in a telephone interview.

Electricity from Napocor or IPPs pass through the lines of National Transmission Corp. and the Meralco network before they reach end-users.

Dee said it would not be enough to just find an IPP that charged a lower generation rate because companies also had to consider transmission charges and distribution wheeling rates.

"We've been asking for open access all along. We were waiting for it to be implemented last year, but it was not. Although the implementation now is late, at least it finally came," he said.

"And we do welcome it. It's a step forward. We just need the rules," he said.

Unconditional offer

The government recently accepted Meralco's "unconditional offer" to allow its big industrial and commercial customers who consume at least 1 megawatt (MW) to choose their own power supplier.

"We anticipate that this offer and its acceptance will enable the industrial sector to avail itself of the lower time-of-use (TOU) rates of Napocor, help reduce the costs of doing business in the Meralco franchise area, promote investments and the creation of additional jobs, and push privatization forward," Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla had said.

The TOU scheme provides Napocor customers with flexible hourly rates that are lowest during off-peak hours, or between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., and highest during peak hours, or from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Sundays and holidays are also considered off-peak times.

Rates are lower during the wet season, or from July to December, as electricity demand usually falls during this time due to the colder weather. Hydroelectric plants are also able to produce more power during these months.

Lotilla said President Macapagal-Arroyo had directed Napocor and National Transmission Corp. to finalize the details of the new arrangement within two weeks.

ERC approval

The scheme could be implemented, however, only after the Energy Regulatory Commission shall have approved the mechanics of the new arrangement, according to the energy secretary.

Once implemented, he said, Meralco's large commercial and industrial customers could take advantage of Napocor's TOU rates by shifting their loads to off-peak hours.

Call centers can take advantage of the TOU scheme as they usually operate during the wee hours of the morning.

Rent and electricity are the third biggest expense of a call center, following labor and telecommunications, according to an industry source.

On top of their monthly electricity bills, call centers usually have to pay between P500 and P1,500 per hour per floor for air-conditioning alone, the source said.

Some manufacturing firms, or those that do not have 24/7 operations, can also take advantage of Napocor's TOU rates as they can shift their operations to off-peak hours.

New cartel?

"Obviously, we'll try to save as much energy as we can by using electricity during off-peak hours. For manufacturing firms that run 24/7, that can be a problem. But others can actually [shift to other power suppliers], especially Napocor, which offer cheaper rates," Dee said.

But militant groups Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and Pamalakaya and consumer advocate People Opposed to Warrantless Electricity Rates (Power) said Meralco's "unconditional offer" was a smokescreen for the government's ploy to team up with "a new cartel."

Bayan said Meralco's dominance in the country would not end with the implementation of partial open access as the Lopez group, which owns Meralco, still maintained holdings in both the generation and distribution sectors.

"Government is just hyping the so-called dismantling of the oligopoly with yet-to-be-seen competition under an assumed level playing field," Power convenor Ramon Ramirez said in a statement yesterday.

He doubted whether large consumers had options to buy cheaper electricity.

"Are there cheaper sources, or will this go the way of the oil industry wherein the supply of electricity is controlled by a few IPPs? Even the privatization of Napocor can lead to a new type of cartel among independent power producers," he said.

Pamalakaya questioned the real intent in Meralco's offer to implement partial open access, particularly with the government's recent threat to take over the distribution utility for non-payment of P42 billion in debts to Napocor.

"Malacañang and Meralco's agreement was not meant to lower electricity rates. That's preposterous," Pamalakaya national chair Fernando Hicap said.

"The power utility giant merely gave in to the request of the Arroyo administration to allow its IPP clients to join Meralco in forming a power cartel, whose operation is similar to the Big Three (Petron, Pilipinas Shell and Chevron Philippines) in the oil industry," he said.

South Koreans ready for life with robots

From page A1

percent of all households in the last half decade, has marshaled an army of scientists and business leaders to make robots full members of society.

By 2007, networked robots that, say, relay messages to parents, teach children English, and sing and dance for them when they get bored, are scheduled to enter mass production.

Outside the home, they are expected to guide customers at post offices, or patrol public areas, searching for intruders and transmitting images to monitoring centers.

If all goes according to plan, robots will be in every South Korean household between 2015 and 2020.

That is the prediction, at least, of the Ministry of Information and Communication, which has grouped more than 30 companies, as well as 1,000 scientists from universities and research institutes, under its wing.

Some want to move even faster.

"My personal goal is to put a robot in every home by 2010," said Oh Sang-rok, manager of the ministry's intelligent service robot project.

Reeling from the Asian financial crisis of 1997, South Korea decided that becoming a high-tech nation was the only way to secure its future.

Technology to homemakers

The government deregulated the telecommunications and Internet service industries and made investments as companies laid out cables in cities and into the countryside.

The government offered information technology courses to homemakers, subsidized computers for low-income families, and made the country the first in the world to have high-speed Internet in every primary, junior and high school.

As with robots and most other specific technologies, the government has had a strong hand in guiding businesses and research centers. Failures have occurred—most spectacularly in biotechnology, when the cloning scientist, Dr. Hwang Woo-suk, was exposed as a fraud—but the successes are many.

Superfast Internet service

Koreans have been able to watch television broadcasts on cell phones free, thanks to government-subsidized technology.

In April, South Korea will introduce the first nationwide super-fast wireless Internet service, called WiBro, eventually making it possible for Koreans to remain online on the go—at 10 megabits per second, faster than most conventional broadband connections.

Oh said South Korea lagged behind American, Japanese and European competitors in robotics but was aiming to be No. 3 by 2013.

While other countries have focused on developing military, industrial or humanoid robots, he said, South Korea decided three years ago to develop service robots that, instead of operating independently, derive their intelligence from being part of a network. *The New York Times*

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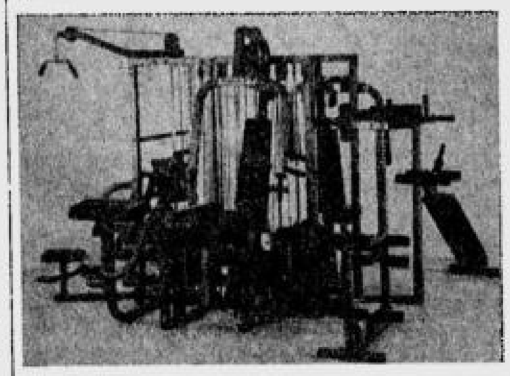

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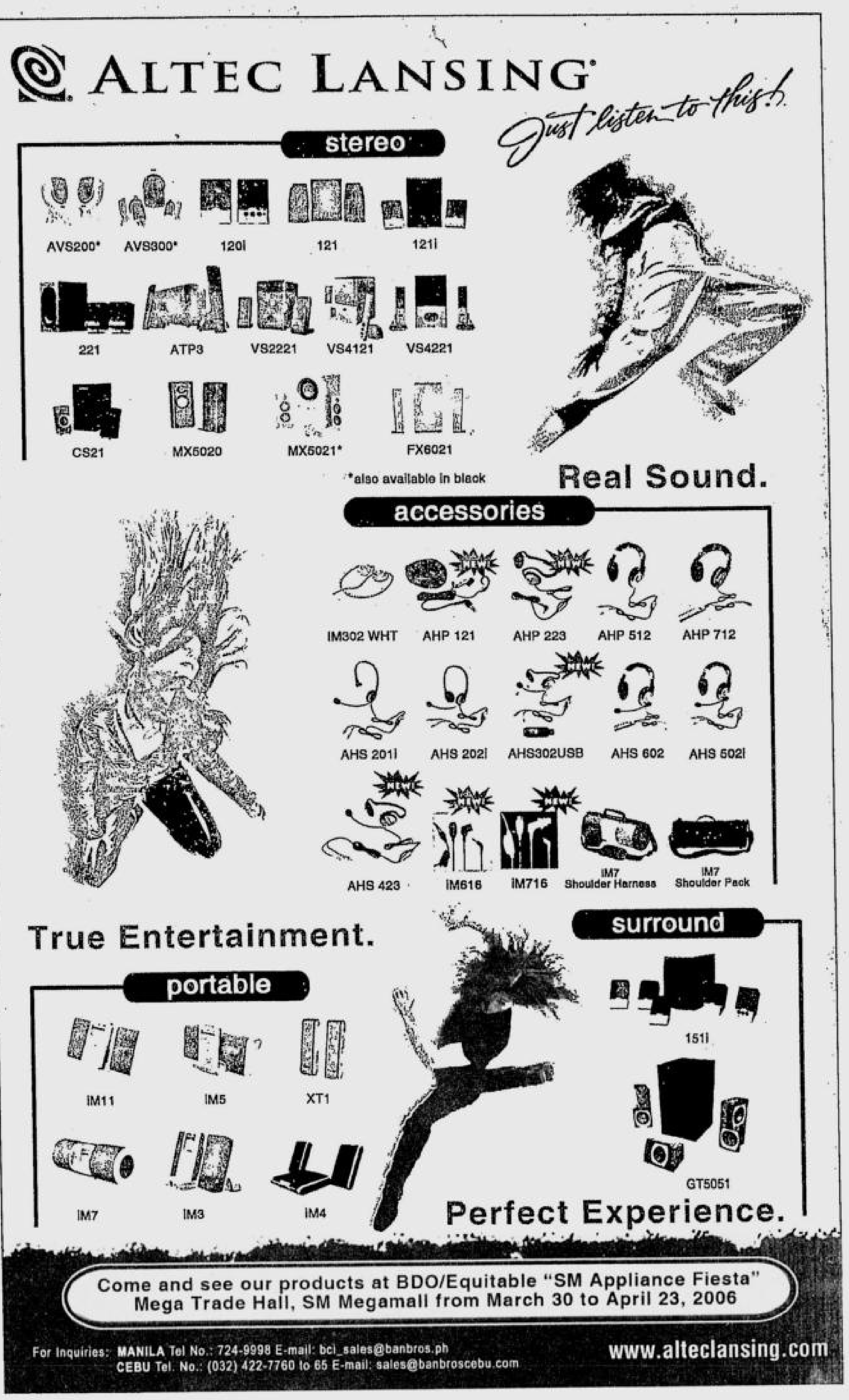

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OFWs against Cha-cha

A MILITANT GROUP OF OVERseas Filipinos workers said Saturday it would do everything to derail the Charter change efforts of the Arroyo administration.

For Migrante International, amending the 1987 Constitution would not improve their lot.

"For OFWs, Cha-cha won't mean an improved welfare so that they could return home soon and be reunited with their families. Instead, it destines them to even greater heights of commodification and exploitation," said Migrante chair Connie Bragas-Regalado.

Migrante has been circulating a petition called People's Movement Against Charter Change to gather signatures from OFWs, their families and other Filipinos around the world. *Jerome Aning*

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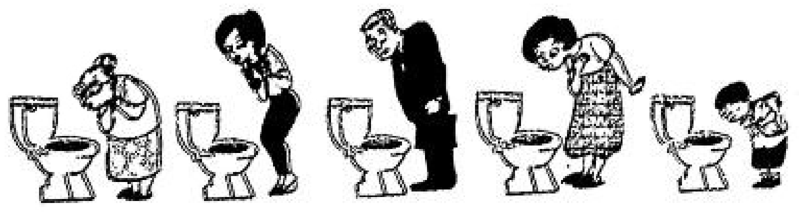

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3	LIKE A SAUSAGE BUT WITH CRACKS IN THE SURFACE	
4	LIKE A SAUSAGE OR SNAKE SMOOTH AND SOFT	✓
5	SOFT BLOBS WITH CLEAR CUT EDGES	
6	FLUFFY PIECES WITH RAGGED EDGES, A MUSHY TOOL	
7	WATERY, NO SOLID PIECES	DIARRHEA

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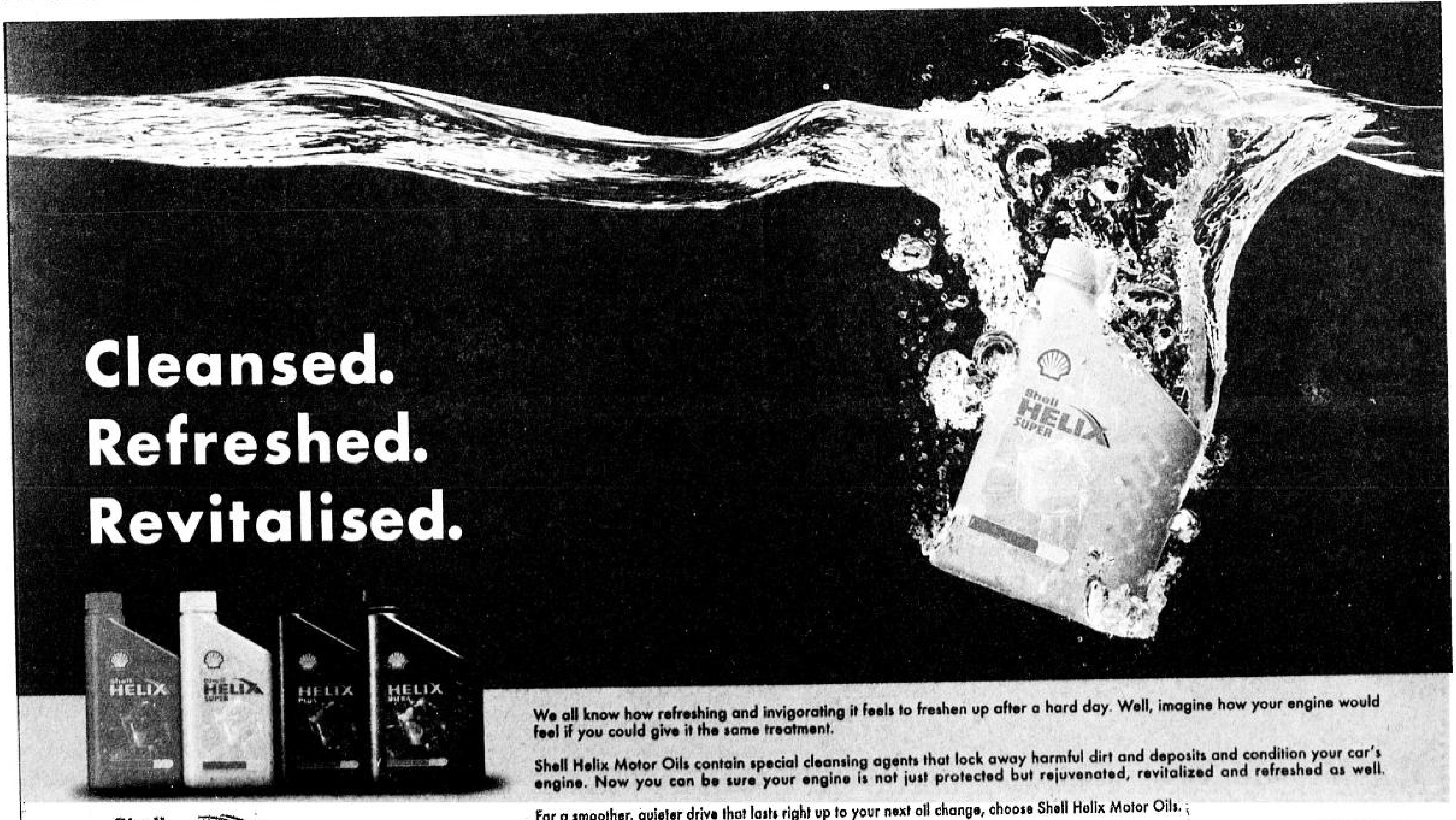

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FUN IN THE SUN
Children play a game during bath time on a sidewalk in Cubao, Quezon City.

JOAN BONDOC

Trader's wife still won't talk to cops

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TWO WEEKS AFTER FOUR MEN SHOT her husband four times in the head in Pasig City, the wife of slain businessman Leonardo Umale has still not given a formal statement to the police.

"We went to their house several times but she has not yet given a statement," Pasig City Police chief Senior Supt. Romeo Abaring said yesterday.

He said Clarissa, who was with her husband when he was killed, could provide the police vital information about the descriptions of the gunmen and possible motives behind Umale's killing.

Clarissa earlier tagged Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson as the mastermind, but Singson had denied the allegation.

In reaction, the police had said they could not consider Singson a suspect without a formal statement and complaint from her.

Not yet ready

Clarissa, however, told the INQUIRER yesterday that she was not yet ready to talk to the police.

"I still don't want to give a statement to the police. I fear that there will be a whitewash in the investigation," she said.

Instead, Clarissa said she and her family were focusing on the information they were receiving from the hotline they had set up after offering a P10 million reward for anyone who could provide information about the killing.

"We have been receiving a lot of information. There were consistent information about the mastermind. But we are still verifying these text messages," Clarissa added.

Eastern Police District director Charlemagne Alejandrino had earlier said they wanted to talk to Clarissa and her lawyers to look into their allegations.

"They have been saying (Singson was behind the killing). We want to find out what made them say that," Alejandrino had said.

No basis

He said that fears of a possible whitewash had no basis as he assured the family of a thorough and impartial investigation. "We are doing our job," he told the INQUIRER.

Clarissa was with her husband on March 16 when he was shot by four men in front of the Pearl Plaza Building.

Lifting of number-coding scheme in April seen

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA Development Authority (MMDA) may start implementing the summertime suspension of the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP) within the month.

MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said they were just waiting for the signatures of Metro Manila's local chief executives before they lift the UVVRP during the school break.

The temporary suspension of the number-coding scheme was proposed last week during the meeting of the agency's policy-making body, the Metro Manila Council.

Vergel de Dios said the proposal was based on the results of a study conducted by the MMDA's Traffic Engineering Center (TEC) in the summers of 2004 and 2005.

"The comparative study showed that there is as much as 30 percent reduction in the number of vehicles on the road during the summer months," he said in a phone interview. The 30 percent drop was above the reduction in vehicular volume resulting from the UVVRP, which is 20 percent, Vergel de Dios said.

Let them drive

"Since less vehicles are used during these months because of the school summer break, motorists might as well enjoy driving their cars," he added.

Vergel de Dios, however, said that the program's benefits would not apply in Makati City, "where the huge volume of vehicles remains unchanged at any given time."

"Makati is a busy district with a minimal number of schools, so the summertime UVVRP suspension program would fail to work there," the MMDA official said.

Effective until June

Vergel de Dios said the program would be implemented until early June, or when the school year officially begins.

Under the UVVRP, vehicles must keep off the roads on certain days based on the last digit of their plate numbers. These vehicles, however, can go out on the street between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., the so-called "window hours."

Of Metro Manila's 17 cities and municipalities, 13 are implementing the UVVRP. The cities of Marikina and Pasig dropped the scheme because they are located at the edge of the metropolis. Makati and Pasay, on the other hand, implement the UVVRP without the window hours.

Traders' route undergoes facelift

THE METROPOLIS' "INvestors' route" has undergone a successful makeover, thanks to a Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) program.

The agency officials have invited Metro Manila's local chief executives to inspect the roads included in the route which runs through Manila, Makati and Pasay.

The 48.7-km road network connects the Ninoy Aquino International Airport to hotels and destinations in the metropolis.

"The mayors could apply the program to their cities and municipalities," MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said.

Greatly improved

He noted that since the beautification program started a few months ago, roads leading to the airport, Malacañang Palace, and the business and tourist districts in Makati and Manila have greatly improved.

The MMDA official added that aside from the clearing and planting of ornamental shrubs on the sidewalks, unsightly houses near the roads have been repainted while street implements like lights, footbridges and signages have been installed.

"The road beautification will really help in improving investors' confidence in our country," Vergel de Dios said.

The P100-million beautification project was launched last year to attract tourists and investors to the country.

Margaux C. Ortiz

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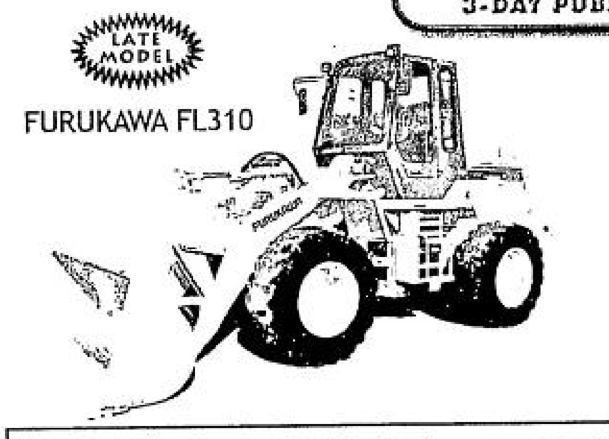

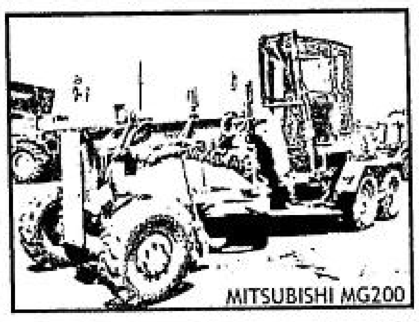

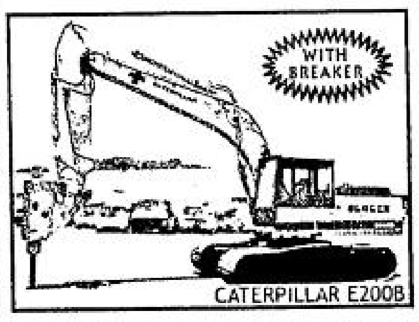

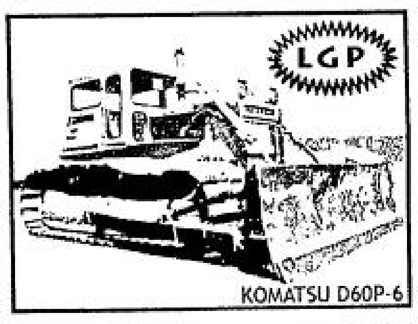

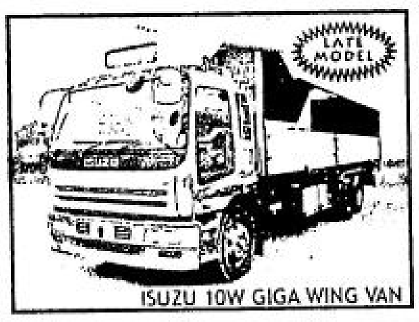

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Woman killed in Intramuros

By Margaux C. Ortiz

POLICE probers try to identify a woman shot dead by a tricycle driver.
RODEL ROTONI

AN UNIDENTIFIED woman was shot to death by a tricycle driver in Intramuros, Manila yesterday morning.

Police described the victim, who was wearing white pants and a black blouse, as between 30 to 35 years old.

A witness told police investigators that she met the victim, who introduced herself as Inday, on Saturday night at Rizal Park.

The witness said that after she accompanied the victim to her house in Tondo yesterday morning, they decided to eat breakfast at a canteen in Intramuros.

Upon reaching the canteen, the victim asked money from an unidentified tricycle driver, who shot her in the face and chest after a short conversation.

Police are looking at a botched drug transaction as a possible motive behind the crime.

10 inmates bolt Pasay youth jail

TEN ALLEGED juvenile delinquents escaped from the Pasay Youth Jail after sawing off the bars of their cell window on Saturday night.

Two of the suspects were, however, recaptured after the lone jail guard sought the help of personnel from the city's Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

Initial investigation showed that the guard discovered the escape at around 10 p.m. and immediately asked for assistance from Pasay City Jail warden Supt. Nestor Velasquez.

Velasquez ordered his men to go after the suspects, who had taken off their detainee shirts at a nearby building to elude pursuers.

While two of the boys were brought back to jail shortly after their recapture, the eight other suspects managed to get away.

The 10 inmates were earlier nabbed by the police for theft, drug use and murder. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

HONEST airport cop Jerry Dalit
JESS YUSON

Honest workers abound at Naia

By Nikko Dizon

A MEMBER OF THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL Police-Aviation Security Group (PNP-ASG) has returned over P50,000 worth of cash and jewelry which he found inside a black bag at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Centennial Terminal.

The bag was later claimed by Paz Lyn Korpov, an American passenger.

PO3 Rommel Arrido found the bag at the X-ray check that he was manning at 1:40 p.m. last Saturday, a report from the PNP-ASG said. Arrido immediately asked the airport paging system to announce that a bag had been found.

Returned to owner

In less than 15 minutes, Korpov arrived and claimed the bag. Convinced that the bag was hers, Arrido's superiors conducted an inventory of the bag's contents in her presence.

It yielded $940 (P49,740), 500 sterling, assorted jewelry amounting to $100 (P5,000), P1,240 cash, and assorted credit cards.

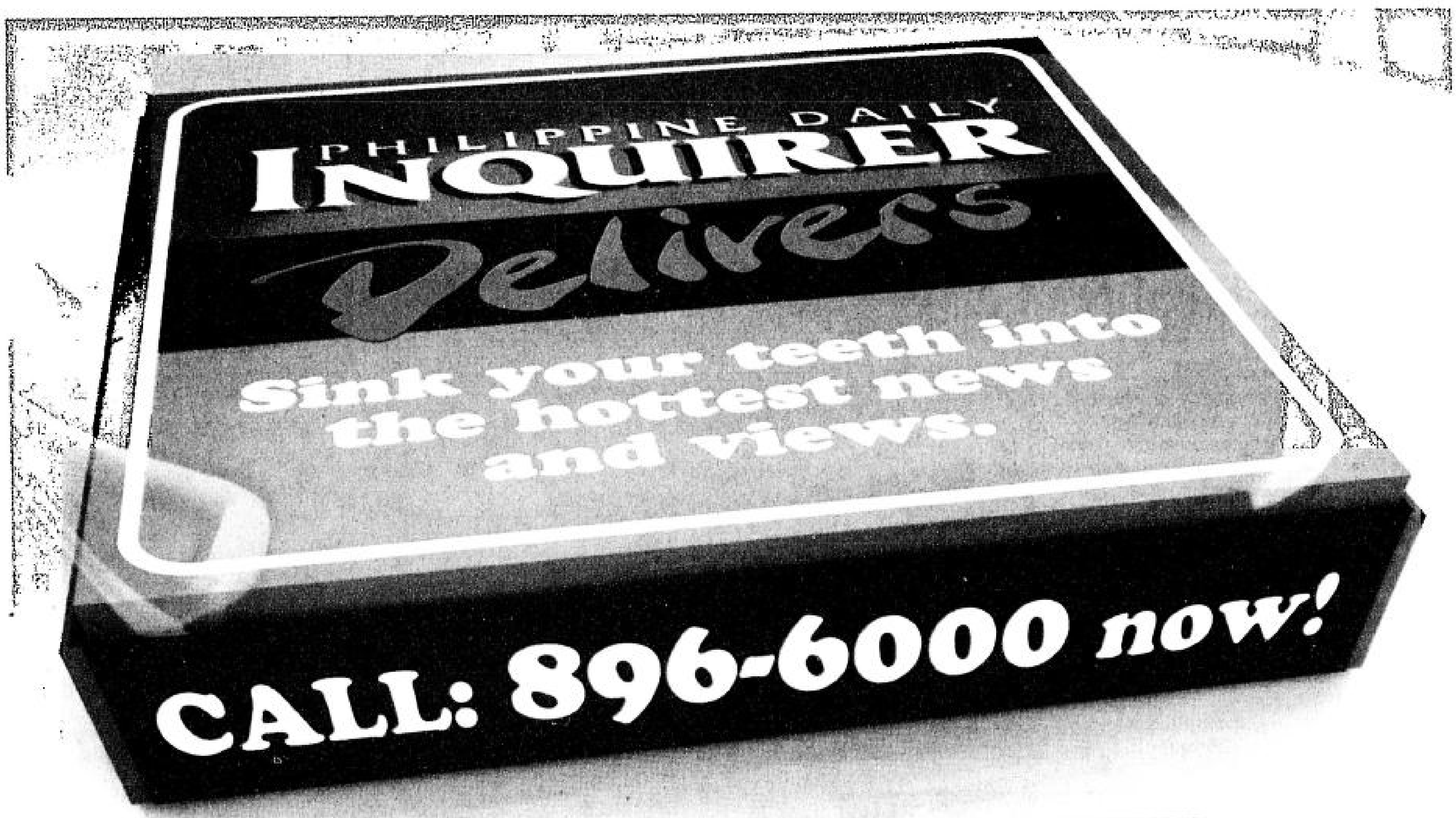
The incident was the fourth recorded act of honesty in a week at the Naia.

On March 24, security guard Jerry Dalit returned P15,600 in cash which he found at the Naia 1 arrival extension area. Three years ago, he had also returned 8,000 Singapore dollars (P288,000) that he found at the parking area.

Lost wallet

Last March 28, Rolando Escabusa, 28, a driver of Sunshine Transportation Inc., one of the accredited transport operators at the Naia, found a wallet in his cab. It contained $1,800 and 500 Saudi riyal, identification cards and credit cards. The items were later returned to Benhavier Saning, an overseas Filipino worker leaving for Riyadh.

Last Friday, airport porter Emmanuel Norte, 29, returned a blue pouch containing $1,200 to its owner, Nicanor Vidallon, a 61-year-old *balikbayan*.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French Socialists issue strike call over jobs law

PARIS—THE OPPOSITION SOCIALIST PARTY called on the French Saturday to throw their weight behind a nationwide strike Tuesday after President Jacques Chirac failed to win support for modifications of an unpopular easy-hire, easy-fire law.

A CSA poll indicated that 62 percent of French people were unconvinced by Chirac's television speech Friday in which he promised to water down the youth employment law he has just signed.

French students and unions have been demonstrating for two months against the First Employment Contract proposed by Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin. The demonstrations on several occasions have veered toward violence.

Although Socialist leaders have been participating in the demonstrations, Saturday's call to arms was the first time the party had incited the bulk of the population to join the strike movement.

A strike last Tuesday created transport disruption and brought more than a million people onto the streets, according to official figures—and three million according to the Communist-led General Labor Confederation.

The first employment contract, as proposed by Villepin, is part of a series of measures aimed at reducing France's exceptionally high rate of youth unemployment.

To encourage bosses to take on inexperienced youths, it proposes that companies can fire workers under the age of 26 without reason at any time during their first two years of employment.

Chirac signed the law but said he would seek new legislation to reduce the dismissal period to one year and require employers to state why they are firing someone.

But Socialist party first secretary Francois Hollande rejected this, saying his party would now seek the total abrogation of the law, and another like it that applies only to small businesses.

"I appeal to our fellow citizens to come to the demonstrations on Tuesday" to support the demand for abrogation, Hollande said. "We need the demonstrations to be more powerful, stronger. We need more people."

Unions see the first employment contract as the beginning of an attack on job security, while young demonstrators say it is discriminatory.

Despite the substantial modifications proposed by Chirac, Villepin said in an interview to be published on Sunday that he did not feel he had been disavowed by the president.

The prime minister acknowledged that errors had been committed, but said: "We live at a time where there is a constant attempt to set some people against others. That is not my idea of politics and I refuse to get involved in this kind of game."

In Annecy in eastern France, more than 300 heads of small and medium-sized businesses marched in a counter-demonstration on Saturday to show their discontent against "the dictatorship of the mob" and the prevalent "immobilism" in France. *AFP*

STUDENTS raise their arms as they vote for a general strike during a meeting of France's student unions, April 1. AP

Hundreds flee as floods swamp Central Europe

PRAGUE—HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE FLED their flood-threatened homes across Central Europe with many more on standby for evacuation as the levels of some rivers continued to rise Saturday.

The floods appeared to have claimed a fifth victim in the Czech Republic and neighboring Slovakia, as a 55-year-old homeless man was discovered dead near the eastern Czech town of Zabreh.

The situation was most critical in the Czech Republic where emergency situations had been declared in half of the country's 14 regions by Saturday night.

Four regional authorities—in Central Bohemia and the Ustecky, Olomouc and Pardubice regions—announced localized emergency situations during the day.

Emergency situations, allowing authorities to mobilize emergency aid, had already been declared in South Bohemia, South Moravia and the Zlin region, in the south east of the country.

Authorities in the city of Olomouc, in the east of the country, announced the evacuation of 2,500 people on Saturday night from those parts of the city most threatened by the Morava river, swollen by rain and thawing snow.

The river Elbe continued to rise throughout the day, with the situation critical around Melnik, around 30 km north of Prague. The head of the Central Czech region, Petr Bendl, said that 2,000 people might have to be evacuated from the town, where the Elbe and Vltava rivers meet, and its surrounding area.

He announced an emergency situation at Melnik and 15 other locations across the center of the country late on Saturday.

Within a few hours Ustecky regional governor, Jiri Sulc, followed suit for all the cities, towns and villages along the river from Steti, around 20 km north of Melnik, to the German border.

Many people have already been evacuated from towns and villages along this 60-km stretch of the river with around 400 people forced to quit the most threatened parts of the main city, Usti Nad Labem.

In Germany, around 300 people were evacuated from their homes in Saxony's main city, Dresden, Friday night as the rising Elbe threatened to flood the historic center.

"People will expose themselves to an irresponsible danger if they stay at home," Dresden's deputy mayor warned on Friday night. *AFP*

FIREMEN cover a dike of the South Moravian river of Morava near the city of Hodonin, Czech Republic. REUTERS

Iran terror response seen to US strike

WASHINGTON—IRAN WOULD RESPOND to US military strikes against its nuclear sites with global attacks by intelligence operatives and Hezbollah teams, The Washington Post reported in an article on its website on Saturday, citing unnamed "intelligence and terrorism experts."

Iran would attack US targets in Iraq and there is "growing consensus that Iran's agents would target civilians in the United States, Europe and elsewhere," The Post said.

"US officials would not discuss what evidence they have indicating Iran would undertake terrorist action," it said.

But the article quoted one "senior official" as saying that the matter is "a huge issue" and another saying it "is consuming a lot of time" in the US intelligence apparatus.

Intelligence officials declined to say whether they have detected "preparatory measures" by Iran's foreign-based operatives, such as more surveillance, counter-surveillance or message traffic, The Post said.

The Post article comes amid increased international tension over Iran's nuclear program, which some nations say is aimed at building atomic bombs. Iran says the program is civilian. *Reuters*

Kurdish protesters rampage in Turkey

KIZILTEPE, TURKEY—THE DEATH toll from a week of violent street clashes between Kurdish youths and security forces in Turkey rose to eight Saturday with fresh riots near the Syrian border.

The violence, the worst in the predominantly southeast Kurdish region for years, has been flaring since Tuesday, raising fears of renewed ethnic bloodshed in the EU-hopeful country.

One person was killed and 16 others, including seven policemen, were injured as stone-throwing demonstrators battled special police units in Kiziltepe, near the Syrian border, local Gov. Mehmet Kilclar told Anatolia news agency.

He said 30 rioters were detained during the violence in which an angry crowd stoned shops, torched a bank and ransacked a tax office, prompting security forces to respond with tear gas and warning shots.

Protesters also vandalized the offices of the ruling Justice and Development Party and an opposition party.

Special forces were deployed in the town, where stones and overturned garbage bins littered the streets, an AFP photographer said.

Scuffles were also reported in Silopi, at the Iraqi border, and Yuksekova, further to the east.

The clashes erupted Tuesday in Diyarbakir, the central city of the region, when Kurdish youths shouting "vengeance" attacked police after funerals for separatist Kurdish militants killed in fighting with the army.

Three children were among the victims of the riots. *AFP*

Preachers' wives can lead difficult lives, say experts

By Woody Baird

SELMER, TENNESSEE—MARY WINKLER was the quiet, unassuming wife of a small-town, by-the-Bible preacher, seemingly devoted to church and family. But now her husband, Matthew, is dead and she is charged with shooting him in the back with a shotgun.

Authorities won't discuss a motive, and church members say they didn't see any indication she was unhappy. But experts say preachers' wives often struggle with depression and isolation, expected to be exemplars of Christian virtue while bearing unique pressures on their private and public lives.

Gayle Haggard, author of "A Life Embraced: A Hopeful Guide for the Pastor's Wife," said ministers' wives can feel isolated because of a misconception about leadership, since they and their husbands are leaders of their congregations.

They can feel trapped, she said, by unrealistic expectations "to live a certain way, to dress a certain way, for their children to behave a certain way."

And ministers' wives often find themselves handling more jobs than they expected to take on, said Becky Hunter, current president of the Global Pastors Wives Network.

"You're not really hired, and yet there is some expectation in most church settings that the pastor's wife comes along in a package deal," Hunter said.

Too often, ministers and their wives are reluctant to seek emotional help from members of their congregations because they're looked up to as leaders, said Lois Evans, a former president of the Global Pastors Wives Network. They can become isolated, lonely and depressed.

"This family needed help," said Evans. "It seems like there was no place to turn to and no place to talk and it became an explosive situation."

Matthew Winkler, 31, was found dead in a bedroom at the couple's parsonage Wednesday night in Selmer, a town of 4,400 people about 80 miles east of Memphis. Mary Winkler, 32, and her three young daughters were found Thursday night leaving a restaurant in Orange Beach, Alabama, about 550 kilometers from Selmer. Orange Beach Police Chief Billy Wilkins said she had rented a condo on the beach after the slaying.

She was charged with first-degree murder and ordered held without bail. Tennessee Bureau of Investigation agent John Mehr said authorities know the motive for the killing, but he would not disclose it.

Mary Winkler was working part-time as a substitute teacher and taking college courses to get a teaching certificate as well as raising her three children and serving the congregation as its preacher's wife.

"You know she was weighted down," said Jimmie Smith, a member of Matthew Winkler's Fourth Street Church of Christ congregation and a retired psychiatric nurse.

Defense lawyer Steve Farese refused to talk about the Winklers' private life or if they had personal troubles. *AP*

Winkler in booking photo. AP

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Music, prayer, promises

Catholic world marks anniversary of Pope's death

THE BODY of Pope John Paul II lies in state in Saint Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in this April 5, 2005 photo. REUTERS

KRAKOW, POLAND—POLAND and the rest of the Catholic world on Sunday commemorates the first anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II, with his successor, Benedict XVI, leading a special Mass in Rome.

In Poland at 9:37 p.m. (3:37 Monday in Manila), the hour of John Paul's death on April 2, 2005, hundreds of thousands of believers at open-air Masses will raise flickering candles toward the heavens.

At the same time Pope Benedict will look down on St. Peter's Square in Rome and recite the rosary.

Visitors will be able to view exhibitions about the late Pontiff's 104 foreign visits and the special relationship he forged with the Jewish people.

In 1986, he became the first pope in history to visit a synagogue. He prayed at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem in 2000, and also several times at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Nazi German death camp in southern Poland where some 1.1 million people died, most of them Jews.

His successor, German-born Benedict, will also pray at Auschwitz-Birkenau when he visits Poland in May.

The tributes will continue into Monday, when Pope Benedict XVI will celebrate Mass in Saint Peter's Square.

John Paul died on a Saturday, and commemorations began in earnest in his former home of Krakow on Saturday.

At noon, two buglers who sound the hour from the spire of Our Lady's Basilica in the heart of Krakow played "Barka," John Paul II's favorite song.

In homage to the late Pope, the buglers' "Barka" will fill the air in Krakow on the first Saturday of each month, at 9:37 p.m.

Krakow, the Pope's home for four decades as priest, bishop and cardinal, before his surprise election to the papacy in 1978, has been draped in the papal colors of yellow and white, alongside the city's own flag.

Candles flickered in front of what has come to be known as "the Pope's window" at the episcopate, from which Cardinal Karol Wojtyla and later Pope John Paul II would speak to Krakow's faithful.

A mosaic of thousands of tiny photographs of ordinary people, worked into a huge portrait of John Paul II, hung on the facade of the episcopate. Underneath were the words: "Thank you JPII."

In the late afternoon, newly installed Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, celebrated Mass for the late Pope at Wawel Cathedral.

"We can state today that he was truly a prophet of Jesus Christ," Dziwisz, a longtime friend of Wojtyla and John Paul II's devoted personal secretary during his 26-year pontificate, said in his homily.

"We are once again united by our great love and gratitude for John Paul II," he told the faithful gathered for the Mass, among them Polish Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz.

Also on Saturday, a Polish-based tribunal hearing testimony into whether the late John Paul II should be beatified wrapped up its investigations, saying several possible miracles that could have been worked by him were being studied.

Proof of one miracle attributed to John Paul II is required before he can be beatified, the first step toward sainthood. A second miracle attributed to his intercession with God would be necessary for full sainthood. *AFP*

Despite risks, freed reporter loved Iraq

By Robert Worth

ONE WARM NIGHT LAST FALL, Jill Carroll sat at a patio table in Baghdad with a group of friends, ticking off the many dangers journalists face in Iraq.

Kidnapping was high on the list, along with car bombs and random shootings.

But Carroll, a 28-year-old freelance reporter one of whose best friends was killed in a suicide bombing a few months earlier, said she could not imagine leaving.

"I've never been as happy as I am here," she said. "It sounds strange and kind of morbid to say it, but I really love this place."

FACE of Iraq in a child. AP

Only a few months later, Carroll herself became one of the most lurid items in the story that meant so much to her. After being kidnapped on a west Baghdad street in January, she was held captive for 82 days by armed militants who twice issued threats to kill her if their demands were not met. They released three videotapes in which she is alternately seen calling for the release of female Iraqi prisoners and sobbing in terror as she pleads for help.

In the end, her captors freed her for no clear reason, dropping her off on Thursday on a street not far from where she was taken. They also posted a videotape of her praising the Iraqi insurgency and condemning the US presence, adding that she felt "guilty" about being released when Iraqis were still suffering.

In her first comments about that tape, in a statement released Saturday by the newspaper she has written for, The Christian Science Monitor, she said her participation was coerced.

"During my last night of captivity, my captors forced me to participate in a propaganda video" to secure her release, the statement said. "I was living in a threatening environment, under their control, and I wanted to go home alive. So I agreed."

She said that her comments on the tape were not her own views, and that her kidnappers had threatened her many times. She called them "criminals, at best."

Through her captivity, Carroll struck a chord in the Arab world as well as in the West, perhaps in part because of her passionate attachment to Iraq and its people. Conservative Islamist politicians in Iraq issued emotional pleas for her release, as did some of the most militant anti-American groups in the Middle East, like Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood. Her pretty, earnest face—usually framed by a traditional Muslim head scarf—became familiar on television screens around the world. *NYT*

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Salvacion saves Kings with trey in extra time

By June Navarro

IT REALLY WAS HIS DAY.

Sunday Salvacion nailed a three-pointer with the clock winding down as Barangay Ginebra escaped with a 91-88 overtime victory over Alaska last night in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

The former NCAA MVP from the College of St. Benilde received the inbound from Jayjay Helterbrand then scored with eighth-tenths of a second left to give the Kings their second straight win.

"It (the pass) wasn't really intended for Sunday (Salvacion) but the passing lanes to Marc (Caguioa) and Eric (Menk) were too tight," said Barangay Ginebra coach Siot Tanquingcen.

Salvacion finished with five points.

With barely no time remaining, the Aces resorted to a catch-and-shoot ploy that saw Don Allado miss at the buzzer.

The goat for the Aces, who dropped to their second straight loss and fell to 3-4 overall, was Nic Belasco, who blew two free throws, resulting in the 82-82 tie at the end of regulation play.

Ginebra rose to 4-3 with the win.

In the second game, San Miguel went on a tear in the fourth period and then held off Talk 'N Text for a 94-90 victory.

The scores:

First Game

GINEBRA 91—Caguioa 25, Menk 22, Helterbrand 21, Adducul 6, Santos 6, Salvacion 5, Holper 4, Ferreria 2.

ALASKA 88—Cariaso 20, Allado 18, Dela Cruz 13, Belasco 13, Wilson 10, Cortez 10, Thoss 4, Hugnatan 0.

Quarters: 21-29, 37-45, 67-61, 82-82, 91-88.

Second Game

SAN MIGUEL 94—Seigle 25, Honliveros 24, Ildefonso 17, Racela 16, Cablay 4, Noble 4, Peña 4, Kong 0, Adriano 0.

TALK 'N TEXT 90—Cardona 21, Miller 21, Taulava 18, Carey 13, Alapag 9, Ferriols 5, Avenido 3, Meneses 0, Juinio 0.

Quarters: 22-23, 49-46, 76-70, 94-90

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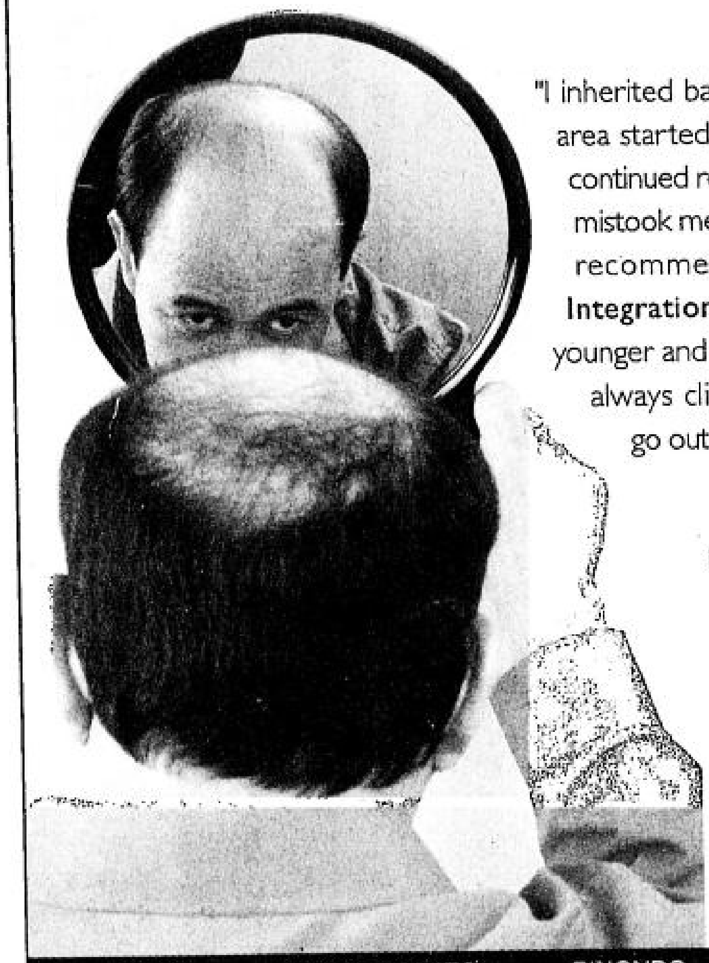

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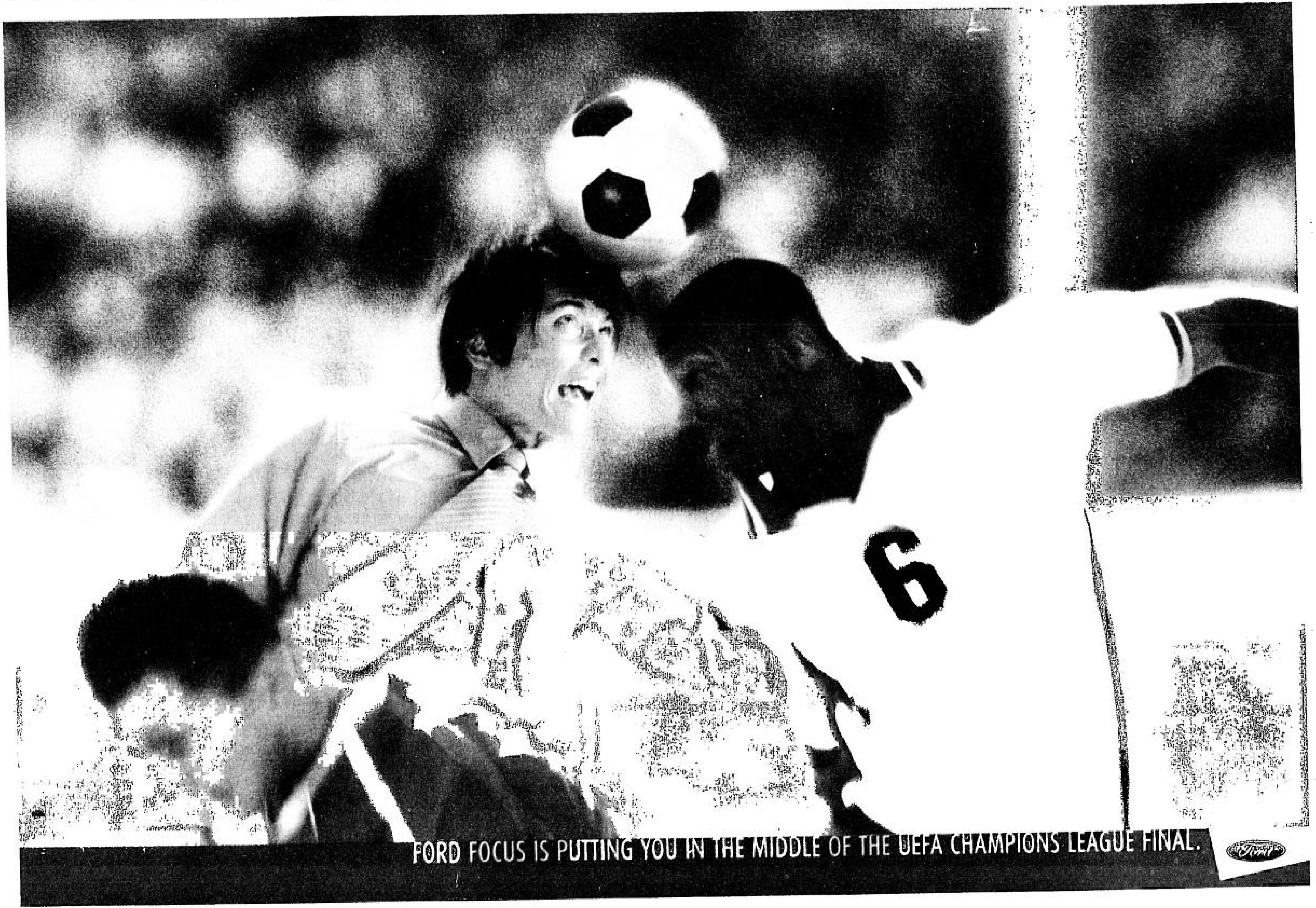
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Juvic rules tough Korean Tour qualifying

PAGUNSAN: Sudden-death win

By Jong Arcano

THERE'S A NEW TOUR FOR JUVIC PAGUNsan to explore and possibly conquer.

After winning his first professional event on local soil, Pagunsan hit it big anew when he topped the Korean Tour qualifying tournament in dramatic fashion yesterday at the Afamosa Golf Resort in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Pagunsan, who won the The Country Club Invitational only last February, beat Rafael Ponce of Ecuador, a familiar fixture in Philippine tournaments, with a par on the second hole of a sudden-death playoff.

Pagunsan capped a sterling performance with a 5-under-par 67 in the final round that allowed him to tie Ponce at 279. He had earlier rounds of 70, 72 and 70. Ponce scored 70, 69, 70 and 70.

Pagunsan is also a cardholder on the Asian Tour.

Antonio Lascuna also earned his Korean Tour card, placing 10th out of the 27 players who made it. He scored 72-73-71-68.

Two other Filipinos, Mars Pucay and Orlan Sumcad, failed to make it. Pucay lost on a countback for the 27th and last slot.

There are 16 legs on the Korean Tour, each with a minimum purse of at least $200,000. The first leg will be played in two weeks' time.

"It's a big opportunity for us," Lascuña told the INQUIRER in Filipino. "It may not be a big tour but at least we'll have a chance to compete for prize money."

With no regular tour to keep them busy, the Filipino pros can ony hope for events like the TCC hosted by Ricky Razon to earn a living.

Jewels regain share of lead; Titans prevail

By Jasmine W. Payo

AL MAGPAYO UNLOADED 22 POINTS AS the Montaña Jewels repulsed the Magnolia Spinners, 68-60, to gain a piece of the lead in the PBL Unity Cup yesterday at the Olivarez College Sports Center in Parañaque.

Magpayo provided the offensive punch with the injured Alex Compton going scoreless in 24 minutes of action, hitting a clutch three-pointer that gave the Jewels a decisive 64-58 lead, with less than two minutes to go.

Top rookie draft pick Larry Rodriguez also delivered, contributing 13 points as the Jewels climbed into a tie with the idle Rain or Shine Painters at 3-0.

Earlier, newcomer TeleTech battled back from 18 points down to register its first victory with a convincing 78-69 decision of Granny Goose.

Trailing 33-51 at the start of the third period, the Titans, mentored by rookie coach Jerry Codiñera, came up with a 20-1 bomb starring Ariel Capus to grab the lead at 53-52.

Capus scored 11 of his 20 points in the third quarter as the Titans improved to 1-2 in a tie with Magnolia, Hapee-PCU and Granny Goose.

"I didn't expect to win this early," said Codiñera. "The boys just worked hard."

The Tortillos were still up, 65-60, early in the fourth quarter when the Titans orchestrated a 12-2 rally that put them on top for good at 72-67.

GAMES TOMORROW
(FEU Gym)
2 p.m.—Montaña vs Rain or Shine
4 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs TeleTech

The scores:

First Game

TELETECH 78—Capus 20, Bughao 13, Duncil 9, Gelig 9, Doruelo 7, Latoreno 6, Estrada 6, Mendoza 4, Villamin 2, Sierra 2, Magdadaro 0, Mercado 0.

GRANNY GOOSE 69—Cruz 16, Quiñahan 10, Ibañes 9, Latonio 8, Ababon 8, Dela Peña 5, Santos 4, Grijaldo 4, Saldua 3, Alfad 2, Concha 0, Cervantes 0, Gavino 0, David 0.

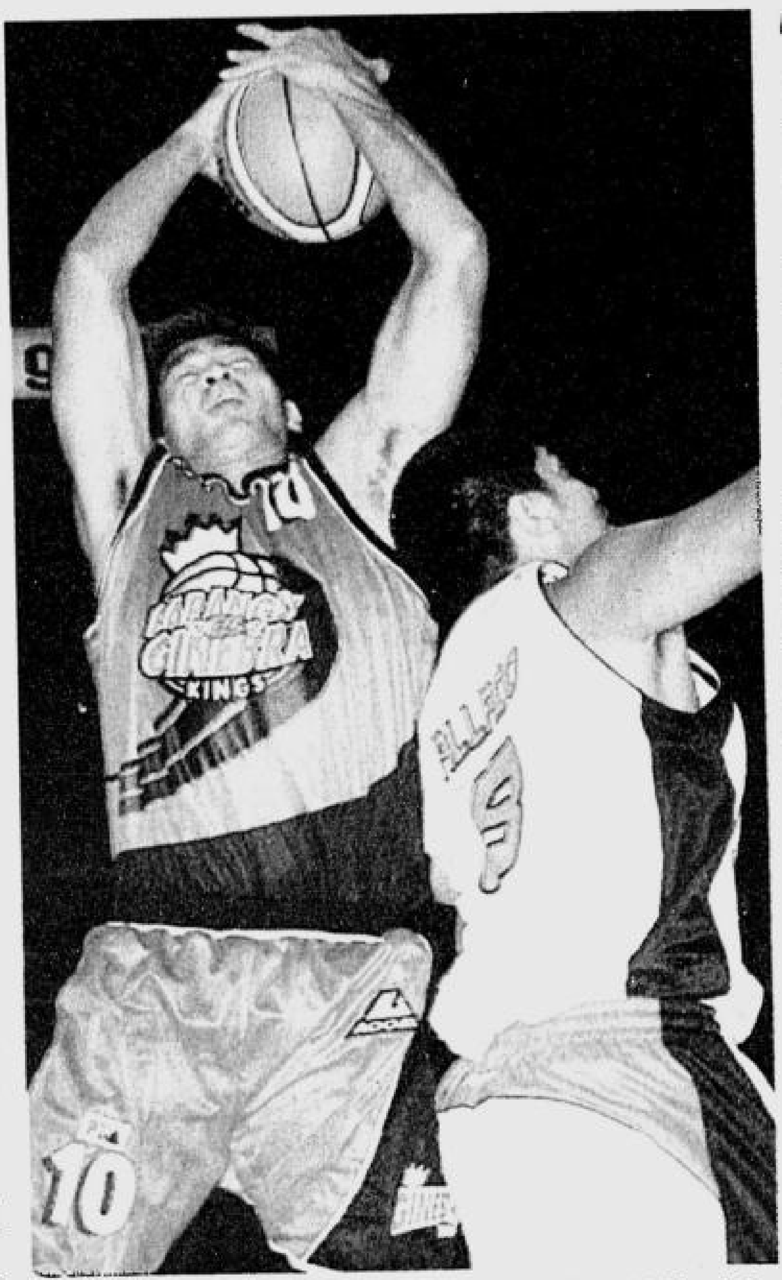
Quarters: 14-23, 33-48, 55-59, 78-69

Second Game

MONTAÑA 68—Magpayo 22, Rodriguez 13, Espiritu 10, Dela Cuesta 6, Guerrero 6, Juntilla 5, Vergara 3, Baguion 2, Bonus 1, Bono 0, Compton 0.

MAGNOLIA 60—Santos 12, Co 12, Williams 11, Valenzuela 9, Te 5, Isip 5, Jones 4, Chan 2, Misolas 0, Bobeo 0.

Quarters: 20-19, 41-35, 52-47, 68-60


ALASKA'S Don Allado (right) looks the wrong way as Romel Adducul of Ginebra grabs the rebound unmolested yesterday. *Story on A29* RUDY ESPERAS

Taiwanese, Ukrainian netters take 2 titles

CHINESE TAIPEI'S LEE HSIN-HAN AND UKraine's Khrystyna Antoniychuyk captured the singles titles then scored in the doubles for good measure yesterday in the 17th Mitsubishi Lancer tennis championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The third-seeded Lee unleashed his powerful forehand to turn back second seed Sho Aida of Japan, 7-6 (2), 5-7, 6-4, and claim his fourth consecutive boys' singles victory after winning three tournaments in Bangladesh this year.

"The weather was too hot, I couldn't breathe," said the 18-year-old Lee, who is ranked No. 17 in the world. He also prevailed over the Japanese, who reached the boys' third round in this year's Australian Open, in last year's Japan Open.

Antoniychuk, the second seed, displayed patience from the baseline to score a 6-2, 6-4, victory over top seed Sacha Jones of New Zealand, 6-2, 6-4, in the girls' finals.

"I'm so thrilled to win," said the 15-year-old Antoniychuk, her country's top junior netter who won her second straight title. "It takes a lot to win against [Jones]. I learned a lot from her today."

Lee later returned with compatriot Peng Hsien-yin to down Aida and Fumiaki Kita, 6-2, 7-6 (7), and claim the boys' doubles title in this Group 1 event supported by Wilson balls, Accel and Traders Hotel.

Antoniychuk matched Lee's feat by teaming up with Austrian Nikola Hofmanova to clinch the girls' doubles crown over the unranked Chinese pair of Zhou Yu Miao and Guo Xuan Yu, 6-4. 6-7 (4), 6-1.

Aida, the singles runner-up in the Genting ITF Juniors in Malaysia two weeks ago, came back from losing the tiebreak in the first set to dominate Lee and forge a deciding third set.

The Japanese, who is ranked No. 10 in the world, sustained his momentum to take a 4-2 lead in the third set before the Taiwanese got his second wind and won the next four points to wrap up the match in two hours and 55 minutes.

"I had my chance but I missed," said Aida, who eliminated Lee's countryman Peng Hsien Yin in the semifinals. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Spring Oil-Parañaque makes it 2 in a row

SPRING COOKING OIL-PARAÑAQUE SPOILED THE debut of Laguna, 86-83, for its second straight victory in the northern division of the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship Saturday at the Lyceum gym in Intramuros.

Mark Yee topscored with 15 points as the Cooking Oil Masters of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Vice Mayor Anjo Yllana recorded their best start in the tournament supported by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

"The boys followed our game plan," said Spring-Parañaque coach Efren "Yong" Garcia after Spring ripped its old partner, the Laguna Pistons of Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro and Sta. Rosa Mayor Joey Katindig.

Melvin Mamaclay proved too hot to handle as the Pangasinan Hundred Islands outlasted Bacchus/Harbour Centre-Manila, 86-79, in the other game.

Mamaclay poured 18 of his 26 points in the second half to give the Pangasinenses their first win in two games while dealing the Manilans their second straight loss.

The scores:

SPRING-PARAÑAQUE 86—Yee 15, Morante 14, De Castro 10, Reyes 9, Barnson 8, Tiongco 8, Manuel 6, Yambao 5, Neo 5, Capobres 4, Mopera 2.

LAGUNA 63—Domingo 21, Proceso 13, Roda 9, Nuqui 4, Natividad 4, Vivero 4, Baylon 2, Alminario 2, Mamangon 2, Fontillas 2, Intano 0, Nolasco 0.

Quarters: 18-20, 38-37, 60-49, 86-63

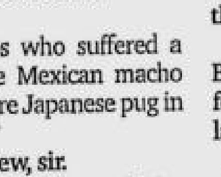
PANGASINAN 86—Mamaclay 26, Aquino 13, Tolentino 12, Lopez 11, Ruiz 9, Tiongson 7, Sese 4, Malares 2, Ton 2, Yambao 0, Valdez 0 Menor 0.

BACCHUS/HARBOUR 79—Epondulan 23, Pribdhas 18, Membrere 12, Hardin 11, Cuevas 9, Sta. Cruz 4, Reroma 2, Padilla 0, Coyukang 0, Retaga 0, Pile 0.

Quarters: 19-9, 36-34, 55-54, 86-79

Old meat Larios could also be tender, soft

BARE EYE



Recah Trinidad

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM A RECYcled steak?

One: It sure would be less juicy.

What else?

There's always the great risk of it playing tough, unmannered.

What do you mean?

One candlelit dinner could turn into a tug-of-war, a nightmarish battle for gum and teeth, a test of table manners and wits, if you please.

Why are you asking? We don't carry old steaks.

Come on, you're missing the point. I phoned to call your attention to what you reported last time, when you said Manny Pacquiao has been hard-selling recycled Mexican meat.

Well, you could always call in the floor manager, have the entire dish replaced. Or you could move to another place, have something fresh and tender.

No way, it's too late, we can't walk out on this one. You can do all sort of gimmicks but Oscar Larios, whom the Pacman is scheduled to fight at Araneta Coliseum daytime on July 2, can be honestly peddled only as old, second-class meat.

Fine. That means he would be tougher, harder to beat.

Wrong, you're wrong again. Larios also promises to be tender, obedient, if hopelessly juiceless.

* * *

Listen, please. To those who have just tuned in, that foregoing piece of conversation was not scripted.

Your reporter here got the call from a very concerned friend and patron of sports, a boxing scholar who considers himself retired. He said he had been advised by his son, a physician, to stay out of serious debates, mainly when it comes to boxing, his original love.

Anyway, our dear friend, who has requested anonymity, said he has disobeyed doctor's orders.

Reason: he had to set the record straight.

Our adviser went on to solemnly announce that Pacman Inc. has no business peddling Larios as brand new. Neither should they peddle him as a tough Mexicano.

Why, sir?

This was the same Larios who suffered a nasty knockdown, the same Mexican macho who was floored by an obscure Japanese pug in Tokyo this time last year.

Wow, that's something new, sir.

I'm a 110 percent sure, he continued. You can ask either Quinito Henson or Salven Lagumbay, who both keep faithful records of rated boxers.

* * *

Mr. Henson, reputed to be a walking encyclopedia of sports, was busy rushing a masterpiece on Pacquiao for a special magazine on the boxing hero, which promises to be a collector's item.

So here's Salven Lagumbay, international boxing judge and boxing scholar:

"Yes, Larios indeed suffered a knockdown in Tokyo, but he went on to win by unanimous decision over his Japanese foe.

"Honestly, I think Larios isn't a pushover. He might end up beating Pacquiao. Styles make fights and Larios is superior in this area."

We passed this piece of information to our friend, who had warned us about the true status of Larios. He replied:

"Yes, he won by unanimous decision, but it was not an easy one. However, you cannot escape the fact that the Japanese foe was a mere aspirant, maybe not truly fit to slug it out with an internationalist. That alone should speak volumes on the alleged durability of Larios who, by the way, is also coming to Manila from a defeat against Israel Contreras, Pacquiao's favorite sparmate at Wild Card."

* * *

Manny Pacquiao Promotions, through top man Eric Pineda, announced last week that the contract for the Pacquiao-Larios fight at the Big Dome has been sealed.

In fact, Pineda bared, no less than Michael Buffer has been contracted to do the barking for the stellar card, which most likely will be labeled Thrilla in Manila II.

Told of this development, our friendly adviser lost his cool.

That's one punch below the belt of poor Juan dela Cruz, he cried. They are spending $17,000 just to bring in Buffer, that's foul, grossly unpatriotic.

What should've been done instead?

Well, in the first Thrilla, Joe Cantada did the ring announcing chore and he made us all very proud before the whole world.

Are you ready to propose someone else?

They should use a local talent, this is another chance to show the world what stuff Pinoys are made of. Our immigration and labor people should disallow this jeopardy. This is unpalatable.

La Salle All-Stars trounce Far Eastern five

DOMINIQUE UY TOPSCORED with 16 points and the La Salle All-Stars cruised to their second straight win, a 79-65 rout of Far Eastern University, in the Total-Filoil-Flying-V Homegrown Cup at the San Juan gym.

La Salle made it a double victory by beating the FEU Baby Tamaraws, 79-70, in high school play.

Dwight Lago and Tyrone Bautista added 12 points each as the Archers alumni of coach Gabby Velasco rallied from a 29-32 halftime deficit to prime themselves up for Saturday's match with bitter rival Ateneo.

The Blue Eagles of coach Chito Narvasa, meanwhile, absorbed their second straight setback, falling to the Letran Knights of coach Itoy Esguerra, 69-62.

The Ateneo Eaglets denied Letran a double celebration by edging the Squires, 70-65, in the tournament sponsored by Shell and Globe and supported by Banco de Oro, Bank of Commerce, Security Bank, Accel, Sunbolt, Millenium Plans, Immuvit, X-24, Gerry's Grill, Inihaw Circle, PBCom and Solar Sports.

SPORTSWATCH

Red Cubs nail Tangkad Sagad crown

FRANCIS MUNSAYAC SCORED ON A TWISTING LAYUP IN THE DYING SECONDS to lift San Beda-Manila over St. Scholastica-Pampanga, 22-21, Saturday and bag the national championship of the first Cherifer Tangkad Sagad basketball tournament at the Tiendesitas People's Village in Pasig City. Munsayac, who topscored for the Red Cubs with 10 points, stole the ball from Lexter Manalo with 6.1 seconds before hitting the winning basket. "I instructed the boys to apply a double trapping defense and go straight to the basket in case of a steal," said a jubilant Red Cub coach Noli Mejos. "It worked." Bryan Mangid led the Pampanga dribblers of mentor Greg Bugayong with seven points. Marist School finished third in the tournament supported by Adidas. Champion coach Yeng Guiao of Red Bull, together with Cherifer product manager Tom Meneses, tournament director Ato Badolato and event organizer Bernard Ocampo, awarded the trophies.

PSA Forum tackles Tour Pilipinas

THE 2006 TOUR PILIPINAS-PADYAK PINOY TAKES CENTER STAGE IN A special session of the PSA Forum tomorrow at the main function room of the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. Heading the guests in the public sports program aired over Sports Radio 918 and sponsored by Pagcor and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza are defending champion Warren Davadilla, 2003 winner Arnel Quirimit and the eight other captains of the 10 teams vying in the 10-day Tour. They will be joined by Tour organizer Dynamic Solutions Inc. officials, headed by Gary Cayton, the advertising manager of Tour presentor Tanduay, Larry Li, and Philippine National Cycling Association president Paquito Rivas.

Mayor Sagun golf at Sherwood Hills

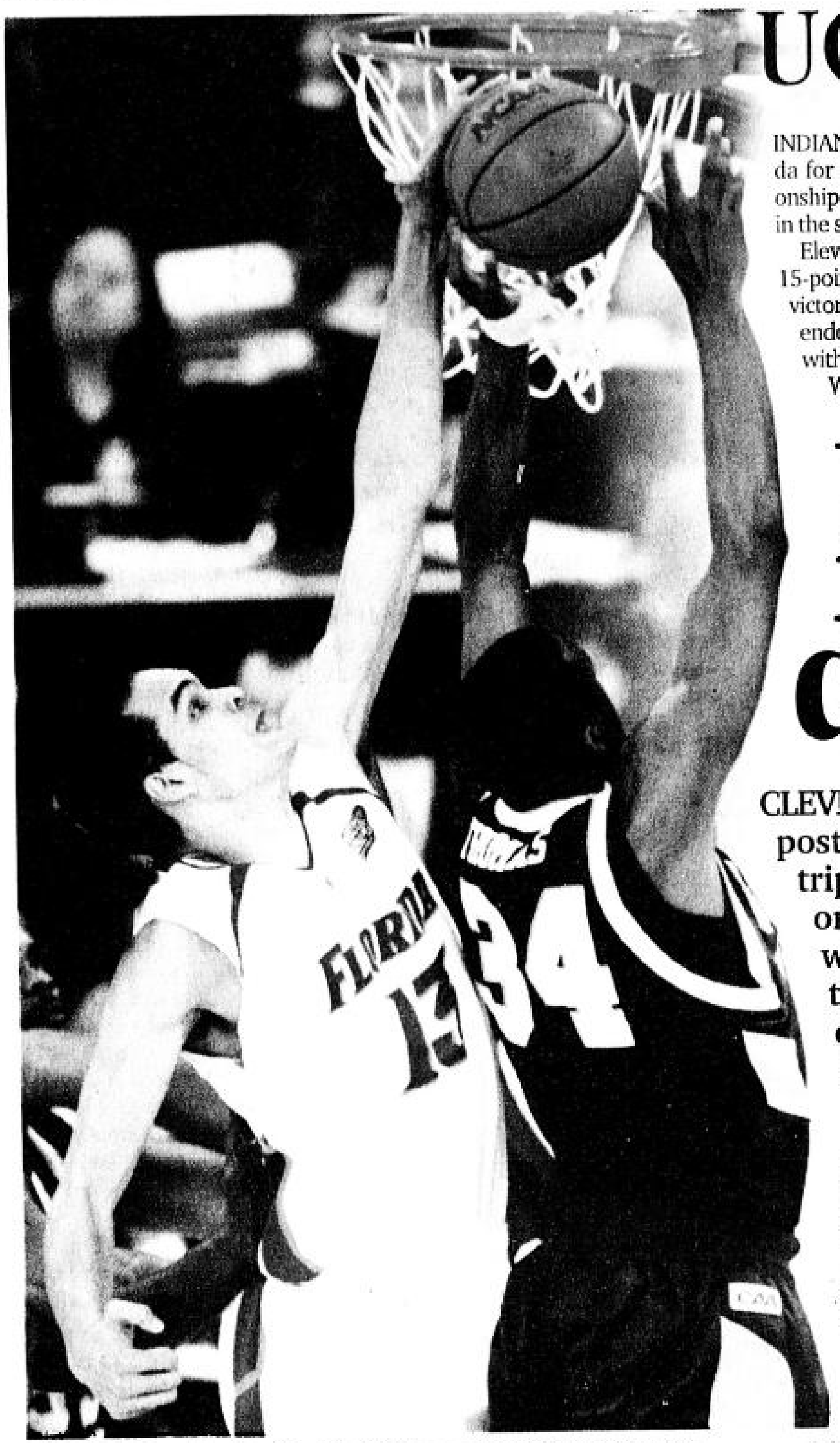
THE FIRST MAYOR JUN SAGUN GOLF TOURNAMENT, A FRIENDLY COMPEtition for a cause, will be held on Friday at the Sherwood Hills Golf Club in Trece Martires, Cavite. Tee off time is from 7 to 10 a.m. Mayor Sagun is holding the 18-hole tourney to help various charitable projects in Trece Martires City. Major sponsors include the Sherwood Hills Golf Club, Industrial Galvanizers, Cavdeal, Rezcoat, Pure Bev. and Pure and Rich. Sagun will be joined in the event by at least 120 friends and supporters. For inquiries, call Raymond Bunquin of Sherwood Hills at (046) 419-0558.

PCAP 5-cock derby gets going

THE BATTLE FOR THE PINOY COCKERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (PCAP) Cocker of the Year title resumes at 5 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum via a 5-cock derby with 70 fights on tap. The PCAP Cocker of the Year and the runners-up will get cash prizes totaling P2 million, said promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co. Of the cash pot, P1 million will come from sponsor San Miguel Corp., makers of B-Meg Derby Ace Premium Formula. Jake Macasaet leads with 20 points, but closing in on him are Orillaza (18.5), Richard Bates and Nicetas Katigbak (18) and Butchoy Olano (18).

300 entries vie for SJC fastest win today

A GUARANTEED PRIZE OF P574,000 AWAITS THE WINNERS IN A FASTEST Win One-Cock Ulutan which fires off at 7 a.m. today at the San Juan Coliseum. More than 300 cockers and breeders are taking part in the competition sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Host Aba Badiola said fights would be held until 12 midnight. As bonus to the early birds, a 14-inch color TV will be given to the first 10 winners while the first 10 losers get an electric fan. The 11th to 20th winners will win a mountain bike each. The fastest winner will get a Honda XRM motorcycle plus P50,000. Second to fifth placers get one Honda XRM each. For inquiries, call 0917-8264018, 725-6563 or 725-5369.



FLORIDA Gator Joakim Noah (left) foils an attempt by the George Mason Patriots Will Thomas. The Gators also spoiled the Patriots' bid for a Cinderella finish in the US NCAA. REUTERS

UCLA, Florida set NCAA title date

INDIANAPOLIS—UCLA WILL FACE FLORIda for the NCAA men's basketball championship after easing to comfortable victories in the semifinals on Saturday.

Eleven-time champion UCLA bolted to a 15-point lead by halftime en route to a 59-45 victory over Louisiana State, while Florida ended the fairytale run of George Mason with a 73-58 win.

Winning a 12th consecutive game, UCLA (32-6) built a 39-24 lead by halftime to wipe out LSU's hopes of making its first appearance in the title game.

A jam by senior center Ryan Hollins from an alley-oop pass by sophomore guard Jordan Farmar ended a 6-1 streak by UCLA to open the second half and give the Bruins a 45-25 lead.

"We beat a very good team tonight, an outstanding team," UCLA coach Ben Howland told reporters.

Freshman forward Luc Richard Mbah a Moute paced UCLA with 17 points and nine rebounds while Farmar added 12 points.

Glen Davis scored 14 for LSU but the Tigers' leading scorer was held to five-for-17 shooting from the floor and four-for-10 from the free-throw line.

"They came out and they just punched us," said Davis, who averages nearly 19 points a game. "We didn't recover from it." *Reuters*

LeBron wins duel vs Wade

CLEVELAND—LEBRON JAMES posted his 10th career triple-double to come out on top in his showdown with Dwyane Wade as the Cleveland Cavaliers cooled the Miami Heat, 106-99, on Saturday.

James had 47 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists while Wade had a season-high 44 points as fans were treated to a duel between two of the NBA's marquee young stars.

"I haven't seen players do that in a long, long time," Miami coach Pat Riley told reporters after the game.

James and Wade went toe-to-toe for most of the night before James finally put the Cavaliers ahead to stay with an electrifying slam dunk with 1:13 remaining.

"We are great friends," James told reporters. "We love competing against one another."

James wound up 16-for-25 from the field and 13-for-14 from the foul line. He hugged Wade at center court when the game ended.

"I had fun. I know he had fun," Wade told reporters.

The win was Cleveland's seventh straight while the Heat lost for the first time in four.

Miami played without Shaquille O'Neal, who missed his second straight game with a knee injury, and Alonzo Mourning.

Cleveland (43-29) is looking to lock up fourth place in the Eastern Conference.

In other games, it was Chicago 100, Boston 94; Milwaukee 96, Indiana 89; San Antonio 106, Washington 99; and Utah 102, Portland 89.

In Milwaukee, Michael Redd scored 39 points as the Bucks beat the Indiana Pacers, 96-89.

The Bucks set an NBA record by making just two turnovers in the game, beating the record of three which has been done seven times.

In Chicago, Kirk Hinrich had 25 points to lead the Bulls past the Boston Celtics, 100-94.

In San Antonio, Tony Parker had 28 points to lead the Spurs to a 106-99 win over the Washington Wizards.

Tim Duncan had 16 points and 14 rebounds for San Antonio (57-16). *Reuters*

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Kuznetsova claims Florida tennis title

KEY BISCAYNE, FLORIDA—FOR 90 minutes Svetlana Kuznetsova kept Maria Sharapova on the run, dashing from corner to corner in vain pursuit of a championship.

As a weary Sharapova found herself on the verge of defeat, she went scrambling yet again after a shot and exclaimed, "Ai-yi-yi."

The crowd laughed, and Kuznetsova won the exchange to reach match point. The former US Open champion then finished with an ace for her first title in 18 months, beating Sharapova, 6-4, 6-3, Saturday at the Nasdaq-100 Open.

"I was not expecting this, but I was doing my best," Kuznetsova said. "I wanted this trophy badly."

Seeded 12th, she won the all-Russian final thanks to a superior serve and forehand, repeatedly driving Sharapova into one corner and then hitting a winner into the other.

The No. 4-seeded Sharapova finished as runner-up at Key Biscayne for the second year in a row. She said she was "a little tired" after winning 11 consecutive matches this month, including the final at Indian Wells.

"Physically it was very difficult to keep up with Svetlana today," Sharapova said. "I just wasn't physically ready to run down a lot of balls."

And what about the exclamation, "Ai-yi-yi?"

"At that point in the match," Sharapova said, "maybe if you laugh, something will happen." *AP*

REIGNING World Champion Fernando Alonso of Spain punches the air in his Renault after winning the Australian Formula One Grand Prix in Melbourne. Alonso won the third race of the 2006 FI GP season having started third on the grid. AFP

Alonso foils Raikkonen, rules Aussie Grand Prix

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—World champion Fernando Alonso held off Kimi Raikkonen on Sunday to win an action-packed Formula One Australian Grand Prix for his 10th career victory.

Renault driver Alonso has now two wins from three races this season after claiming the Bahrain GP last month, and leads the drivers standings with 28 points from three races. McLaren-Mercedes driver Raikkonen and Alonso's Renault teammate Giancarlo Fisichella are next with 14 points apiece.

"Twenty-eight points in three races is a dream come true," the Spaniard said. "It's the start of the season, so let's hope we finish like last year."

Last year wasn't too bad either.

"The important thing is to be consistent, be on the podium, like I did 15 times last year I think," Alonso said. "This year I am 3-for-3."

Toyota driver Ralf Schumacher finished third. Honda's Jenson Button, who started from pole position, missed out on fifth when his engine caught fire just meters from the finish line.

The safety car made four appearances and 10 drivers made premature exits as cool conditions at the Albert Park circuit made it difficult for tires to get enough grip.

"The race was a little bit crazy, I didn't understand. I was 20 seconds ahead and the gap disappeared," Alonso said. "But there was no risk to lose the victory anytime."

Michael Schumacher crashed in the 33rd lap and Felipe Massa's race ended in a wreck on the first lap in a disappointing Melbourne race for Ferrari. *AP*

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MY Games action up; 2 legends honored

FIRST Gentleman Mike Arroyo and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza (second and third from left) respond to the cheering athletes during the opening ceremony of the Manila Youth Games yesterday.
RODEL ROTONI

By Jasmine W. Payo

AFTER DECLARING UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRAM, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza yesterday declared open the fifth Manila Youth Games at the Rizal Memorial track stadium.

Atienza assured the top 17-and-under athletes from the city's public and private schools and out-of-school youths that Manila will continue to provide them with "equal opportunities in sports."

"It has always been said that the youth is the hope of the nation," said Atienza. "That is why your city hall is focusing on the youth by providing them with an endeavor that would guide their paths toward becoming assets of society."

First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo was the guest of honor. Games and Amusement Board chief Eric Buhain and commissioner Joey Mundo of the Philippine Sports Commission also graced the rites.

Legendary basketball coach Virgilio "Baby" Dalupan and Eddie Pacheco were honored during the ceremony.

Dalupan, considered one of the country's finest mentors, and Pacheco, the first of only two athletes voted as "Mr. Basketball" and "Mr. Football" by the Philippine Sportswriters Association, received plaques of recognition.

An acrobatic show, a taekwondo demonstration, a cheering competition and a 10-minute firework display enthralled an estimated 30,000 audience, which included athletes, local government officials and representatives from 897 barangays, six congressional districts and 130 public and private schools.

The young athletes will compete today for 59 gold medals in gymnastics and 30 golds in swimming at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

Action also starts today in badminton and table tennis.

Organized by the Manila Sports Council (Masco) under Arnold "Ali" Atienza, the biggest sporting event by a local government unit is presented by Converse with support from the PSC, Pagcor, San Miguel Corp., Super Ferry, Montaña Pawnshop, Globe Telecoms, Milo, Air 21, IntraSports and Concept Movers.

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Ochoa takes 3-shot lead over Wie

RANCHO MIRAGE, CALIFORNIA—Lorena Ochoa survived a day that roughed up just about everyone Saturday in the Kraft Nabisco Championship, making a testy par putt for a 2-over 74 and a three-stroke lead over Michelle Wie.

Ochoa led by at least three shots throughout the third round and no one could make much of a run at her in the blustery conditions.

"I'm happy with the finish," said Ochoa, who was at 9-under 207. "Three shots makes a big difference."

Wie missed a good chance. After making a 15-foot bogey putt on the 13th hole, she made a 10-footer for birdie, but then finished her round by missing four birdie putts inside 18 feet.

The 16-year-old Hawaiian fired a 73 and still has a chance to became the youngest player ever to win a major.

"If I'm destined to win, it's going to happen," Wie said.

LORENA Ochoa (foreground) keeps her distance from Michelle Wie. REUTERS

Ochoa opened with a 62—matching the best score ever in a major championship—and shot a 71 on Friday.

Runaway Phil

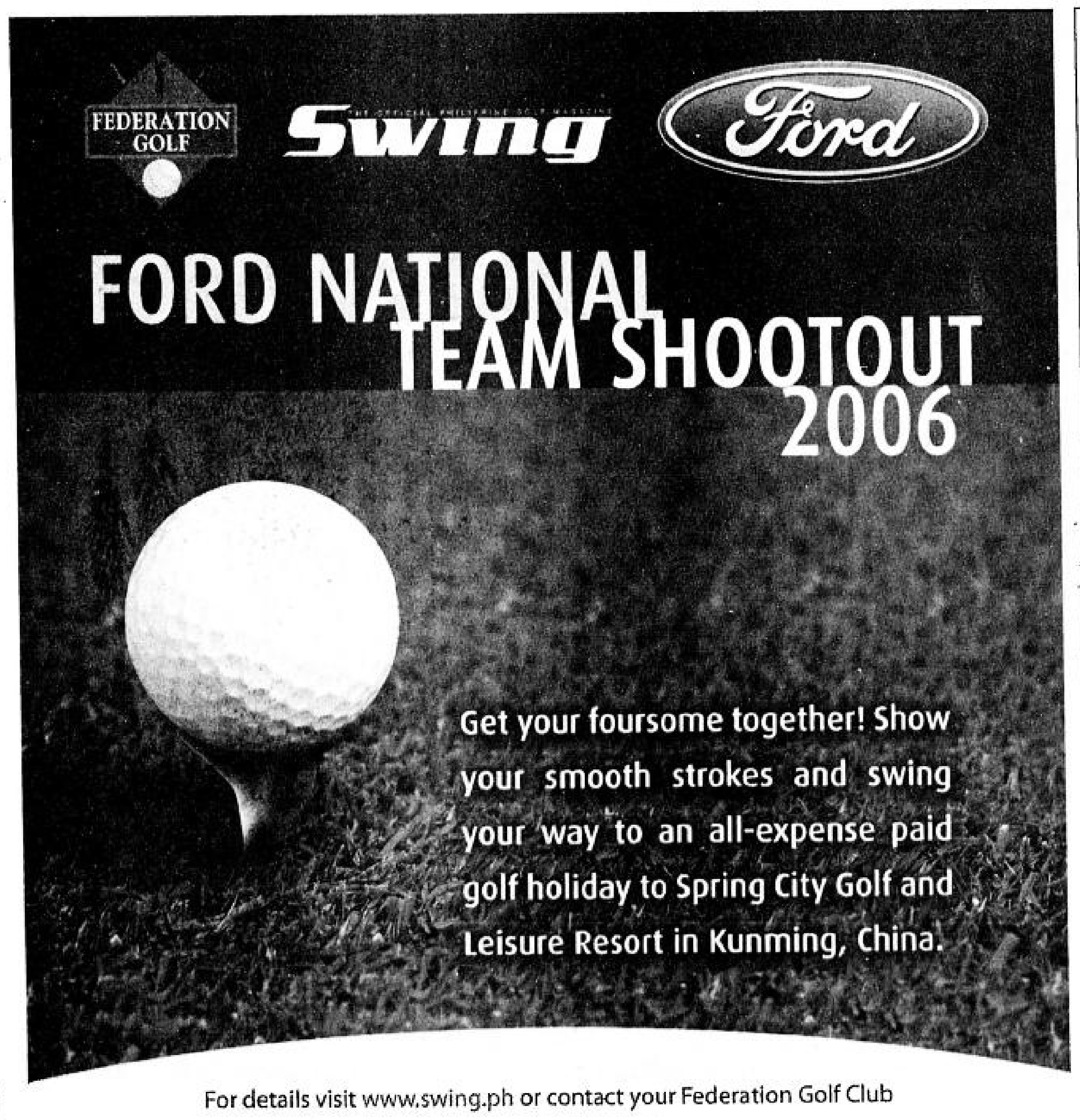
In Duluth, Georgia, Phil Mickelson birdied five straight holes on the front nine en route to a 5-under 67 Saturday, giving him an eight-stroke lead after three rounds of the BellSouth Classic.

The defending champion was at 21-under-par 195 despite closing with a double bogey to finish four strokes off the best 54-hole total on a par-72 course in US PGA Tour history—Gay Brewer's 25-under 191 in the 1967 Pensacola Open.

Jonathan Byrd and 2004 winner Zach Johnson were tied for second, and Jose Maria Olazabal was fourth at 12 under.

Johnson shot a 64 on Saturday to reach 13 under. Johnson also was at 203 through three rounds in 2004, but that year the total was good for a three-shot lead.

"That's just freaky good golf," Johnson said. "You want to say there's always a chance, but it's hard to say in this situation. You have to keep playing." *AP*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April 4-9 - Sta. Elena Golf Club, Sta. Rosa, Laguna
April 5 - Negros Occidental Golf & Country Club
April 6 - Forest Hills Golf & Country Club, Inc. Antipolo City
April 7 - Manila Southwoods Golf & Country Club, Carmona, Cavite
April 8 & 9 - Camp John Hay Golf Club, Baguio
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April 8 & 9 - Valley Golf & Country Club, Cainta, Rizal
April 8 - Wack-Wack Golf & Country Club, Mandaluyong
April 9 - Manila Golf & Country Club, Forbes Park
April 22 - Eagle Ridge Golf & Country Club, Gen. Trias, Cavite
April 22 - Canlubang Golf & Country Club, Canlubang, Laguna
Stage 2: Satellite Elimination in each district
(Luzon, North, South, East, West and Visayas/Mindanao)
Stage 3: Grand Finals

Make or break

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

IT WILL BE MAKE-OR-BREAK FOR PHILIPpine basketball when a powerhouse delegation headed by Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco meets international basketball federation (Fiba) secretary general Patrick Baumann in Seoul tomorrow to seek recognition for the newly formed Pilipinas Basketball and plead for the immediate lifting of the nine-month-old Fiba ban on the country.

Cojuangco will personally inform the Fiba official that Pilipinas Basketball was formed by four of five major stakeholders—PBA, PBL, UAAP and NCAA—to replace the Basketball Association of the Philippines, in compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding forged between the POC and Fiba last year.

Also joining Cojuangco in the meeting are representatives of the four stakeholders and some members of the Philippine media. What will be achieved in this meeting? Will Cojuangco bring home the bacon? I hope he does.

Still, many think the trip is doomed to fail, stressing that Baumann, being an astute observer of the international sporting scene, may not make a firm commitment at this point (and place).

The most that he could do is sue for more time, seek another (and proper) venue and placate members of the Philippine delegation by giving them "a pat on the back" for coming to Korea to personally see him. Which means that the Fiba decision would remain hanging?

Recall that Fiba had berated the POC for expelling the BAP, a longtime Fiba member. Baumann said Fiba could not accept the POC's decision to expel one group in favor of another, adding that the POC should have given new BAP president Joey Lina more time to effect changes in his beleaguered association after taking over from the ailing Tiny Literal only some months back.

The BAP was expelled last June by a huge majority of the members of the POC general assembly. Among other reasons, the BAP was sacked for "reneging" on a resolution which BAP officials themselves signed to express "full cooperation to the POC" on the formation of a strong and well-trained national team.

However, this same set of BAP officials, plus a few more, did a sudden turnaround by passing another resolution stating that the BAP is forming instead its own national team.

At the moment, Philippine basketball is in a state of distress. A win-win solution to the feud between the POC and the BAP is unlikely at present mainly because Cojuangco and Lina continue to exchange bitter words.

* * *

Many boxing diehards, including old-timer Bomber Pamiloza, say the $1,000 price for a bleacher ticket for the coming Manny Pacquiao-Oscar Larios non-title fight at the Big Dome is too stiff.

"*Masyadong mahal* (Too prohibitive)."

Isn't Pacquiao supposed to be "the people's champion?" Then why is he allowing the organizers of the fight card to charge a very expensive general admission fee which is beyond the reach of the ordinary fight fan?

When the Big Dome opened its doors to the public on March 16, 1960, the general admission fee was only 60 centavos. In that inaugural fight, Gabriel "Flash" Elorde knocked out American Harold Gomes in the seventh round.

By the way, a ringside ticket, according to a certain Jo Ramos, will cost P25,000 each while choice seats will be pegged at $1,000.

Lim, Ramos gain last eight

CASSANDRA LIM AND SAMANTHA RAMOS advanced to the quarterfinals with ease in the JVC Open Juniors Badminton Championships at SM North Edsa over the weekend.

The top-ranked Lim, playing out of Poveda, romped to a 21-13, 21-6 win over Greencourt's Lois Locsen while Ramos of Marikina Sports Hub trounced Juby Evangelista of 5AM Club, 21-7, 21-13, to advance to the last eight of the 10-under girls' category.

Also advancing were Ingrid Obinial, Patrize Israel of Sportszone, Abbygale Evangelista of 5AM Club, Joella de Vera of Whakers, Jona Juanilo of RAQ4 and Marina Caculitan of Woodrose.

Obinial and Abbygale Evangelista won by walkover; Israel bundled out Michelle Cruz of La Salle-Zobel, 21-4, 21-7; De Vera held off Alyssa Leonardo of Malolos, 21-19, 21-12; Juanillo routed Hasmin Labay of Pasig, 21-10, 21-13; and Caculitan beat Larrilyn Ballesteros, 21-16, 21-4.

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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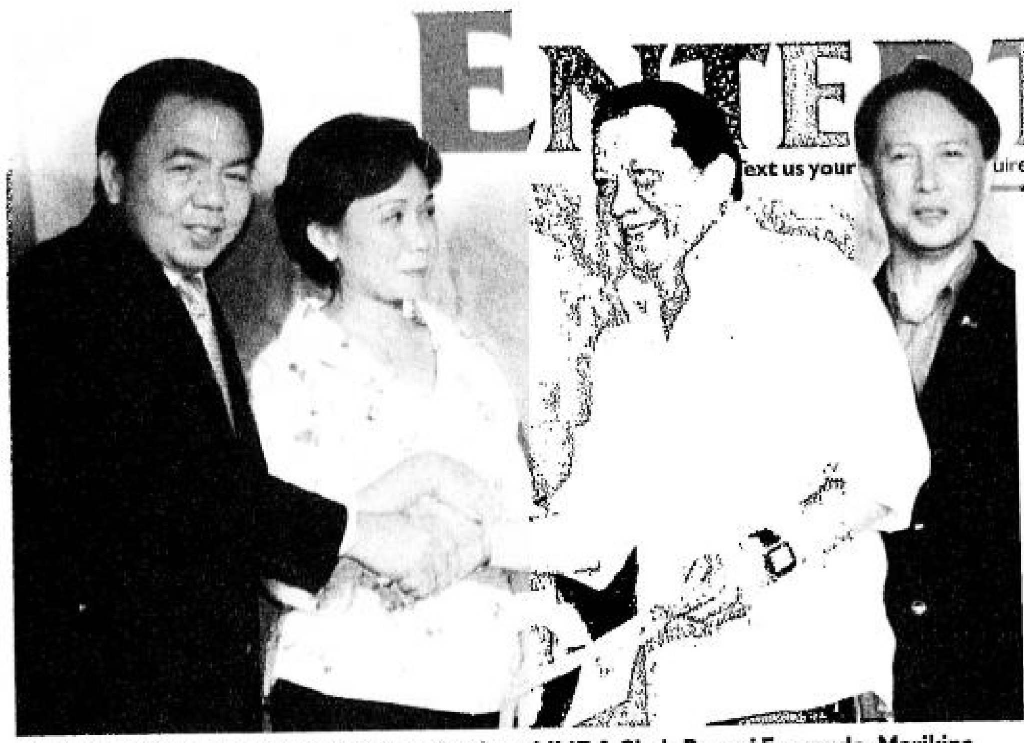

AT THE AWARDING of the filmfest cash prizes: MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando, Anti-Film Piracy Council treasurer Orly Ilacad and Usec Robert T. Rivera of the Office of the President.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Under appeal!

MMFF allocations out; not everyone's happy

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE PIE HAS BEEN RECUT BY MALACAÑANG, and major players in the movie industry seem unhappy about their slice.

The Palace released last week its decision on "the distribution of the proceeds of the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) 2005," as promised by President Macapagal-Arroyo to industry leaders last Feb. 20.

The news was confirmed by Rolly Josef, chief of staff of Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando.

Fernando was out of the country at press time.

Reported Josef: "The MMDA received Malacañang's instruction, but it is currently under appeal by the affected parties—the Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP), the Motion Picture Anti-Film Piracy Council, Inc. and the Movie Workers Welfare Foundation Inc. (Mowelfund)."

In the reallocation, FAP's share was slashed from 30 to 10 percent and the Anti-Film Piracy Council's share from 30 to 5 percent. Mowelfund's share was upped from 30 to 35 percent.

The share of the President's Social Fund (PSF) was raised from 10 to 35 percent, with the qualification that "amount shall be used for film welfare."

Two new beneficiaries—the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) and the Optical Media Board (OMB)—are set to receive 10 and 5 percent, respectively.

INQUIRER Entertainment received a copy of Malacañang's memorandum from one of the involved sectors.

Signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo, the memo dated March 16 was addressed to the MMFF executive committee. Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita issued a supporting memo dated March 21 and received by the MMDA on March 23.

In early February, Leo Martinez complained to Malacañang about the initial reallocation, proposed in January by Vicente del Rosario, presidential consultant for the entertainment industry.

In Del Rosario's proposal, the PSF, FAP and Anti-Film Piracy Council's shares were 10 percent each; Mowelfund, 30 percent; OMB and FDCP, 20 percent each.

As a result of Martinez's protest, Malacañang subsequently released the new distribution scheme.

The latest appeal was confirmed by FAP director-general Martinez and Anti-Film Piracy Council president Ric Camaligan.

Boots Anson-Roa, Mowelfund executive director, pointed out that "MMDA Chair Fernando and FAP director-general Martinez were initially working to increase Mowelfund's allocation to 40 percent, but we're thankful just the same because we just wanted our original 30 percent allocation to be maintained."

The five percent increase in Mowelfund's share, said Roa, "is very much welcome."

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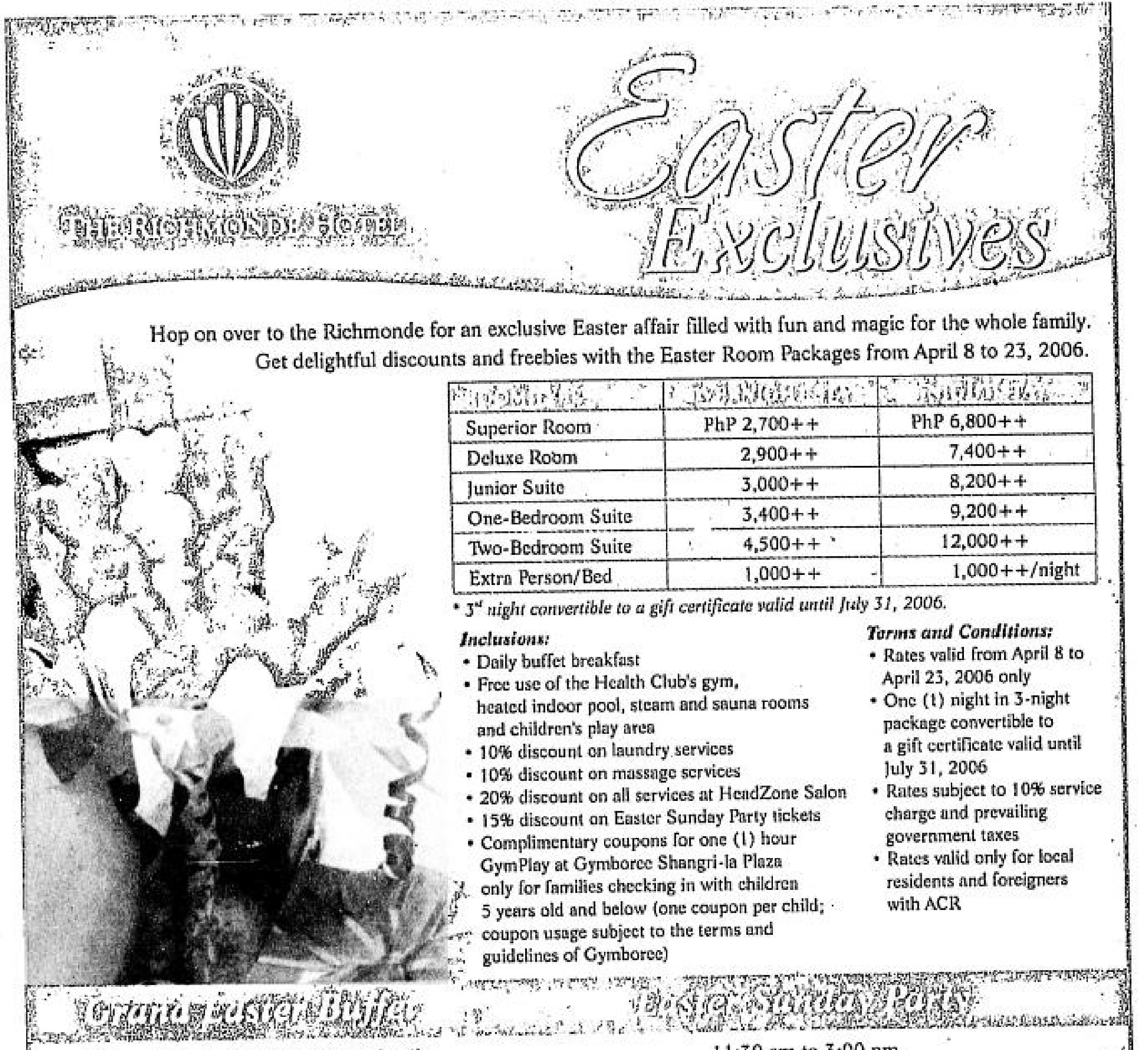

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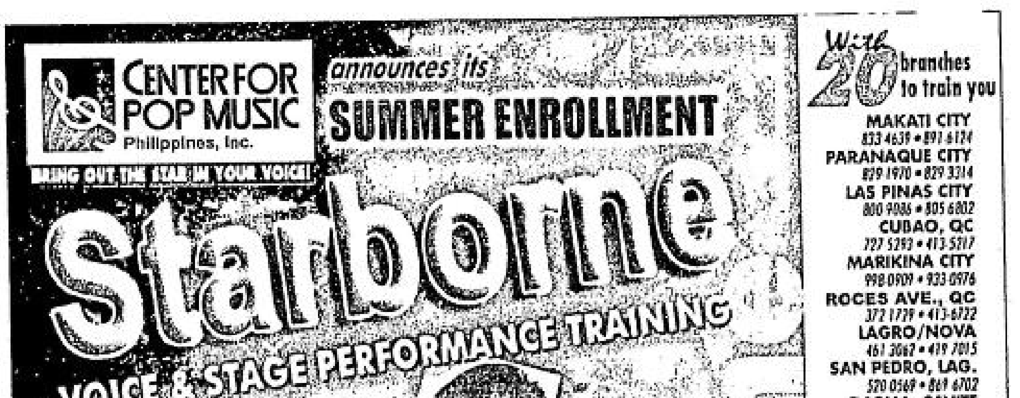

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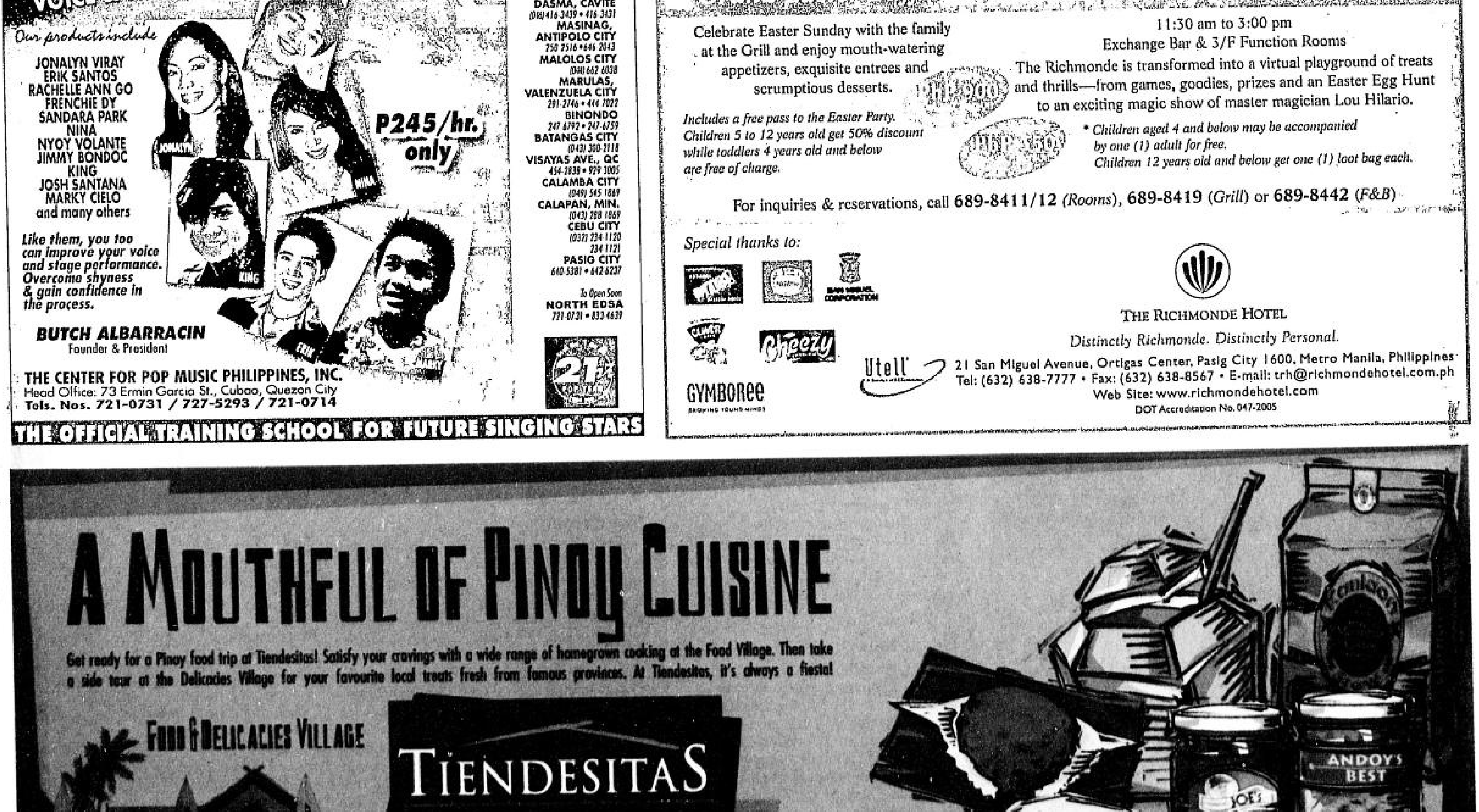

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Her so-called life with movie stars

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

YESTERDAY

GROWING UP ON THE SAMPAguita Pictures lot immunized Ma. Azucena Vera-Perez against star fever.

The eldest daughter of producers Dr. Jose Perez and Azucena Vera-Perez recounts: "It wasn't like I was gazing from afar. I was with them every day. We ate at the same table, at the same time."

She still counts as friends the country's most gorgeous actors and actresses at the time.

"I never understood why my snooty classmates in Assumption and St. Scholastica's were so fascinated with celebrities," says the Sampaguita scion now known as Manay Ichu Maceda.

Although she was no fan, she enjoyed watching Filipino movies—especially those starring Tessie Agana, a second cousin and bosom buddy. Another favorite was "MN" which starred Carmen Rosales and Alicia Vergel.

She knew stars were mere mortals; at the same time, she was keenly aware that they were a breed apart.

"My father taught me that actors, being artists, think differently," Ichu recalls. "They had quirks, he said, and it was the producer's job to understand them."

She remembers how her dad "spoiled" box-office queen Carmen Rosales. "In 'MN,' her hair was short, but for one scene, in which she was supposed to brush her tresses in front of a dresser, she demanded to wear a long wig because, she insisted, it looked better. Needless to say, my father granted her wish even if the earlier scenes had established that she had short hair."

Continuity be damned.

Ichu remembers her own brush with the power of celebrity: "Tessie and I loved fried chicken wings from Max's. Since she was the studio's biggest star, she often got *all* the chicken wings. I used to get very upset over that [but] I learned to eat the drumsticks instead."

But they remained pals.

"After Tessie's crying scenes, we would play *piko* [hopscotch]," Ichu says. "She explained to me that, whenever she needed to cry on cue, she would think of her father, who was based in the United States."

Tessie was pampered by Sampaguita, too, but Ichu believes that it was well-deserved because the tot single-handedly saved the studio from bankruptcy in 1951.

"I was about nine years old then," Ichu says. "The studio had burned down and we lost four finished but unreleased movies."

Surprise hit

Right after the fire, her grandparents, Jose and Dolores Vera talked to the studio's stars and staff. "They announced that the company would have to close shop. Everyone was crying. I remember hearing [character actress] Bella Flores telling my grandparents that she was willing to work for free."

Around that time, her father acquired "Roberta" from *komiks* writer Mars Ravelo.

"We used the studio's ruins as location for that movie," she says. "Shooting was quick. My parents were stunned by its box-office performance. It earned P120,000 when it was made for only P40,000."

In her teenage years, Ichu singled out the good-looking and well-educated Greg Martin as her crush.

"Nothing happened," she exclaims. "He never courted me. My father was very strict."

Ichu and Susan Roces, "my closest friend," met in their teens.

"I had just come from school when I saw this girl in braids and blue-and-white *colegiala* uniform in the garden," she says. "My father introduced her as 'Jesusa Sonora—she will be one of the biggest stars in the movies [because] hers is a face that refreshes.'"

When the future star left, Ichu told her father: "How can she become a big star? Her legs are so huge—they're as big as mine! And her face is so puffy and round, like a *palanggana* (basin)."

She remembers telling Susan about this later. "She laughed so hard!"

Midas touch

Ichu concedes that her father's instincts proved infallible. "Susan became a movie queen."

Her dad had the Midas touch, she says. "In the 1950s, the Showman's Club of the Philippines gave awards to the Top 10 box-office hits of the year. Out of 10, my father would have produced seven or eight."

Ichu became one of Susan's staunchest supporters in the heat of the election protests after Fernando Poe Jr.'s defeat and death.

"What I like most about Susan is that she doesn't say anything that would hurt others," Ichu says. "She's very tactful. Unlike [her screen rival] Amalia [Fuentes] who's brutally frank."

Oh.

Overall,' she describes her childhood as "peculiar."

"I had a terrible case of inferiority complex because I was dark and ugly, compared to my brother Pepito, who was *mestizo*," she says. To avoid the hurtful comparisons, she would hide and knit in her room all day.

Her father assured her: "You'll be surrounded by beautiful people all your life ... what is important is to be beautiful inside—to have a good heart and a sharp mind."

Ichu recounts: "He gave me books to read; he trained me to be a good conversationalist. Slowly, my insecurities disappeared. I was never envious of Sampaguita stars. Instead, I always admired them because they were so good-looking."

Today, between her painting lessons and jewelry-making, she has found the time to publish a book.

Ichu will share her unique fascination and encounters with the stars in a forthcoming coffeetable book entitled "Legacy," to be written by INQUIRER Entertainment columnist Nestor U. Torre.

Rare photos

She promises: "It will have never-before-seen photographs. Nestor managed to interview some Sampaguita stars like Oscar Moreno and Fred Montilla and director Luciano B. Carlos, who have since passed away. I am writing an essay entitled 'Growing Up With the Stars.' Hopefully, we can launch it in time for my late father's birthday on Oct. 15."

The young Ma. Azucena Vera-Perez never understood why her classmates were fascinated with celebrities

THESE are her own paintings.

PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS • ADDITIONAL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MANAY ICHU MACEDA

AT AGE 10

SUSAN Roces is closest friend.

ICHU and second cousin Tessie Agana

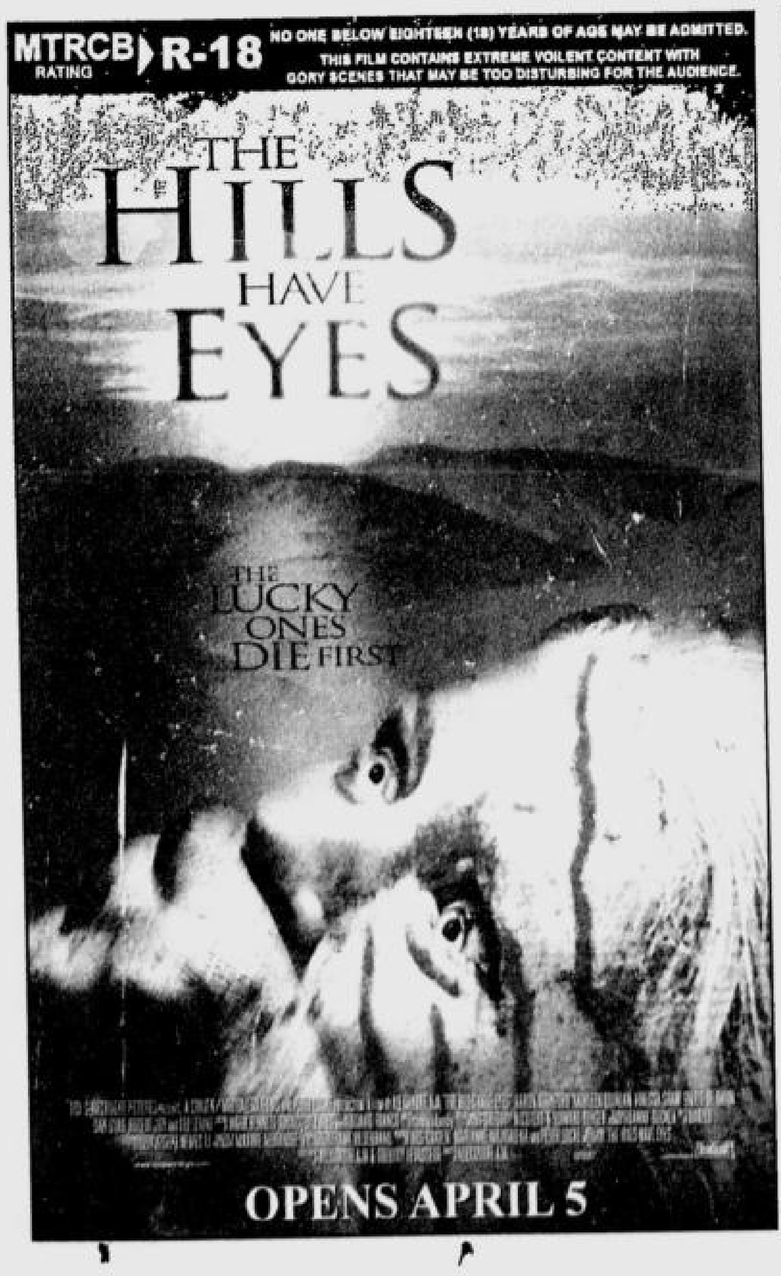
WITH Ditas Rodrigo and Swanie

GRADUATION day with her parents

AT AGE 3

SHE makes jewelry as a hobby.

WITH visiting dignitaries and Swanie, Gloria Romero, Vina Mercado and Daisy Romualdez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THIS FILM CONTAINS EXTREME VOILENT CONTENT WITH GORY SCENES THAT MAY BE TOO DISTURBING FOR THE AUDIENCE.
THE HILLS HAVE EYES
THE LUCKY ONES DIE FIRST
OPENS APRIL 5

Hello? TV to go, please!

CHEER FACTOR

TOKYO—JAPAN'S 90 MILLION CELL phone users play video games, download music files, exchange e-mail, read news, trade stocks, store digital photos and surf the web—all on tiny handset screens half the size of a business card.

Now, they're watching TV.

Digital TV broadcasts for portable devices equipped with special receivers were to start in Japan's major urban areas last Saturday, and a test broadcast had been running for months, for limited periods.

And unlike many other services on cell phones, the new TV service is free.

But finding the new phones in stores has been hard as eager consumers have snapped up the limited number on the market so far. Japan's major mobile carriers say sales are good, but have not disclosed numbers.

No buttons

Although the phones' screens are small, Akihide Kuwamoto was grateful he owned one during the recent World Baseball Classic series, which the Japanese team won.

"It's convenient for watching TV whenever you have a spare moment," said the 32-year-old web designer, who didn't even watch that much TV before he bought his new phone.

"I like watching it while I'm eating out because you don't need to push any buttons or anything," he said.

Japan's mobile TV service is not the world's first—South Korea, Great Britain and several other nations already offer it, although with different technologies. Services are offered in some parts of the United States as well, although its use is not widespread.

But the new service in Japan will potentially reach the broadest market yet through the country's terrestrial digital broadcast system, which relays images through the air via TV towers, not satellites.

It's also a different technology from Net broadcast because it uses broadcasting air waves, rather than an Internet connection, to relay streaming video.

Switch over

By 2011, Japan aims to switch over completely to digital TV broadcast, which can relay more data than analog. That allows for better image quality and the transmission of additional information, which pops up on the monitor, such as baseball players' statistics while watching a game.

So far, Japan's mobile carriers haven't been too aggressive about pushing the broadcasts—precisely because it's free and won't directly generate new revenue.

But Masayuki Ishikawa, senior manager of multimedia services at Japan's top mobile company, NTT DoCoMo Inc., is hopeful that watching mobile TV will prompt more people to use the company's Internet-linking "i-mode" service, which allows cell phone users—for a fee—to download music, exchange e-mail, do restaurant searches and play video games.

"I-mode was mostly dependent on younger people and other heavy users. TV is familiar to older people and all ages," Ishikawa said.

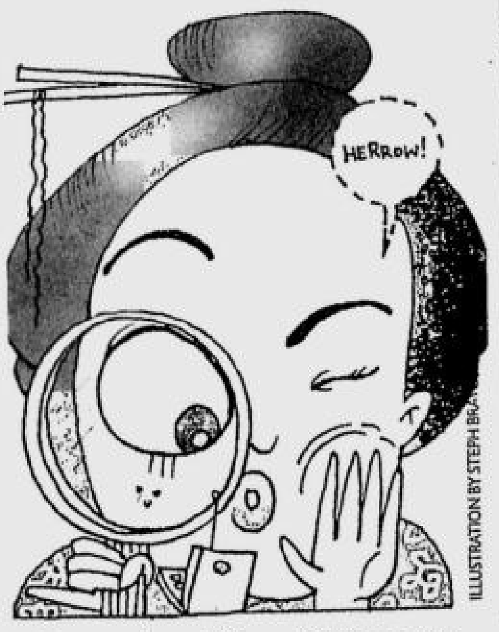

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRA

Might as well

"The drawback is that people who'd been using i-mode or doing e-mail may start watching TV," he said.

NTT DoCoMo, which now sells just one handset model for digital TV, says sales are going well.

Rival KDDI Corp. sells two models for mobile digital TV. Vodafone in Japan, now owned by Internet company Softbank Corp., plans to start selling such a handset in June.

Misogo Kado, a 37-year-old software designer from Yokohama, near Tokyo, is completely sold on the TV service. "If you're buying a cell phone," he said, "you might as well get one with it." AP

New TV series less than magical

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE'VE BEEN VIEWING GMA-7'S NEW *fantaserye*, "Majika," ever since it first started telecasting, so we can share these notes on how it's coming along:

At the start, we were heartened when the people involved in the show said it would be more child-friendly than other *telenovelas*, which tend to be too violent when they stage fights and battles.

True, "Majika" is less dependent on armed conflict to keep viewers glued to their TV screens. But the hatred that some of its villainous characters harbor for the show's protagonists is occasionally a caution for child viewers.

Also, some of the series' principal characters are children, and yet they're put through the wringer when it comes to the dangers and stresses they're exposed to in the show.

This is done to make the plot development exciting and involving, but it could cause young viewers too much fear and stress as they empathize with the young characters' woes.

Not very psychologically healthy, either, is the way that the series' child characters are made to cry a blue streak so often in the show.

But the major problem with "Majika" is its slow progression. Its story unspools in such a protracted and extended manner that some viewers quickly lose interest.

We also recall that some people involved in the show once said its magic elements would be more pronounced than the fantasy aspects, and that this would make the show different from the more established *fantaserye* on the tube.

In practice, however, after the first few telecasts, the series' magic tricks began to pall, and its standard fantasy effects again held sway.

This was to be expected, since magic tricks tend to lose their ability to excite after a while, and more captivating sleights of visual can be achieved with special computer effects.

Be that as it may, we appreciate the show's impressive production design, and some of the experienced actors in its cast. Unfortunately, the show is so visuals-driven that the gifted actors don't really have much opportunity to show what they can do.

If the series gives them greater leeway to come up with compelling performances, it'll be the better for it.

Finally, the series has too many continuing characters. As a result, its dramatic focus is too diffuse, and viewers aren't encouraged to have a personal emotional stake in its plot and character development.

Solace

The four-piece band Solace specializes in combining elements of classic rock with alternative rock sensibilities. It has written 10 songs for its debut album "Never Easy," including "Borrowed Time," "Healing," "Ed," "Dream Maker," "Radio," "Bridging the Gap" and "Riding with Angels."

New season

Tomorrow at 10 p.m., AXN starts the new season of "CSI: New York." The premiere episode finds that a mosquito could be the key to the mystery of a climber's fatal fall from the Empire State Building. Meanwhile, a male fashion designer is found dead wearing a diamond bra worth $8M!

Dr. Sheldon Hawkes (Hill Harper) joins the CSI team out in the field, leaving the autopsy room in the hands of a young and handsome medical examiner, Dr. Evan Bao (Ron Yuan).

In addition, new investigator Lindsay Monroe (Anna Bellknap) brings new enthusiasm, style and a shocking past to the team.

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2 ICE AGE 2 1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:30 G
3 ICE AGE 2 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00 G
4 VENOM 2:15, 4:25, 6:35, 8:45, 11:00 R-13

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CINEMA 4 BASIC INSTINCT 2 11:10, 1:35, 4:00, 6:25, 8:50 R18
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NANNY MCPHEE G 1:30,3:40,5:50,8:00
JUST FRIENDS R13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50
VENOM R13 1:40,3:40,5:40,7:40
ICE AGE 2 G 12:30,2:30,4:30, 6:30,8:30
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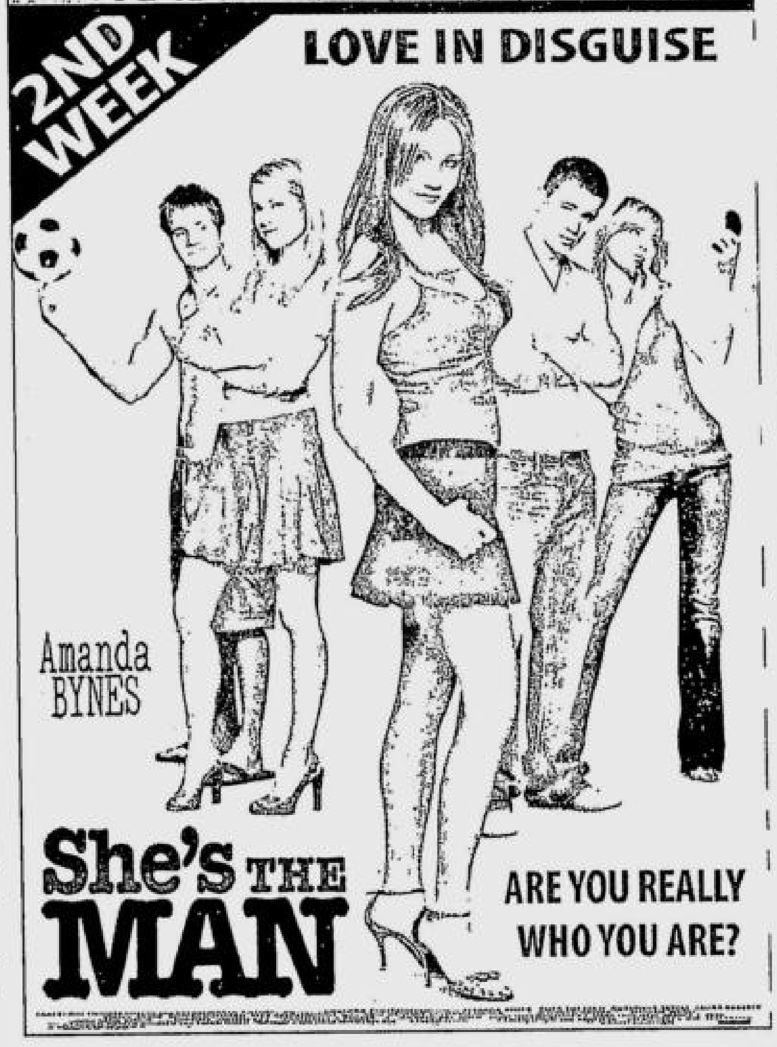

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She's THE MAN
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8 MOMENTS OF LOVE
9 V FOR VENDETTA
10 ULTRAVIOLET

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4 VENOM
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3 (DOLBY) ICE AGE 2
4 (DOLBY) VENOM

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3 BEAUTIFULL BOXER
4 (DTS) THE DARK
Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
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2 XXX.COM
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4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 VENOM

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
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2 VENOM
3 (DTS EX) MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN

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NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No. (044) 600-3025
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2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 HOSTEL

Cine Nepo
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1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 (DOLBY) RESERVED
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Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 GLORY ROAD
2 ICE AGE 2
3 16 BLOCKS
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
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MOMENTS OF LOVE
ICE AGE 2
RESERVED
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2 HOSTEL
3 (DOLBY) FINAL DESTINATION
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Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 AEON FLUX

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 THE DARK
2 DARK DANCER

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ROUNDUP

Inspirational songs lead Awit hopefuls

SONGS with positive messages of hope, true love, patriotism and self-transformation top the 19th Awit Awards nominees' list.

GARY V

Gary Valenciano has three songs on the list from two CDs that are also competing for Album of the Year and Best-Selling Album of the Year.

The songs are "Break Me" from "Soul Full" and "Ikaw Lamang" and "Lipad ng Pangarap" from "Pure Heart."

Bamboo is nominated in eight categories—from Rock to Ballad and World Music. "Hellelujah" is a contender for Song of the Year. It is from the album "Light, Peace, Love," also nominated Album of the Year.

Rivermaya's "You'll Be Safe Here" earned nods for Song of the Year and Best Performance by a Group.

Orange & Lemons is nominated for Best Song for Movie/TV/Stage Play with "Pinoy Ako." The song was written for the TV series "Pinoy Big Brother." It is from "Strike Whilst the Iron is Hot," nominated for Best Selling Album.

Hale is competing for six trophies, including Song of the Year with "The Day You Said Goodnight," Album of the Year and Best Performance by a New Group.

Year of fools

LOS ANGELES—Faded pop superstar Michael Jackson was Friday crowned as America's most foolish person in 2006, narrowly beating out trigger-happy US Vice President Dick Cheney for the title.

MICHAEL Jackson

The 47-year-old "King of Pop," who is living in exile in Bahrain following his acquittal last June on child sex charges, snatched the dishonor for the fourth year running, according to a survey by a US public relations consultant.

Sixty-nine percent of the 1,045 people polled in a random telephone survey ahead of April Fool's Day said the singer had "done something foolish" in the past year that merited the title, the poll showed.

Cheney tied with US hotel heiress and socialite Paris Hilton for second place.

The vice president became the focus of a media firestorm and the butt of a barrage of jokes after he accidentally shot an elderly friend in the face and neck with a shotgun while quail hunting last month.

US President George W. Bush came in third in the survey.

US movie star Tom Cruise snatched fourth place, entering its ranks for the first time after leaping on TV talk show queen Oprah Winfrey's sofa while expressing his love for fiancee Katie Holmes. *AFP*

GEORGE Clooney

$45,100 swag bag

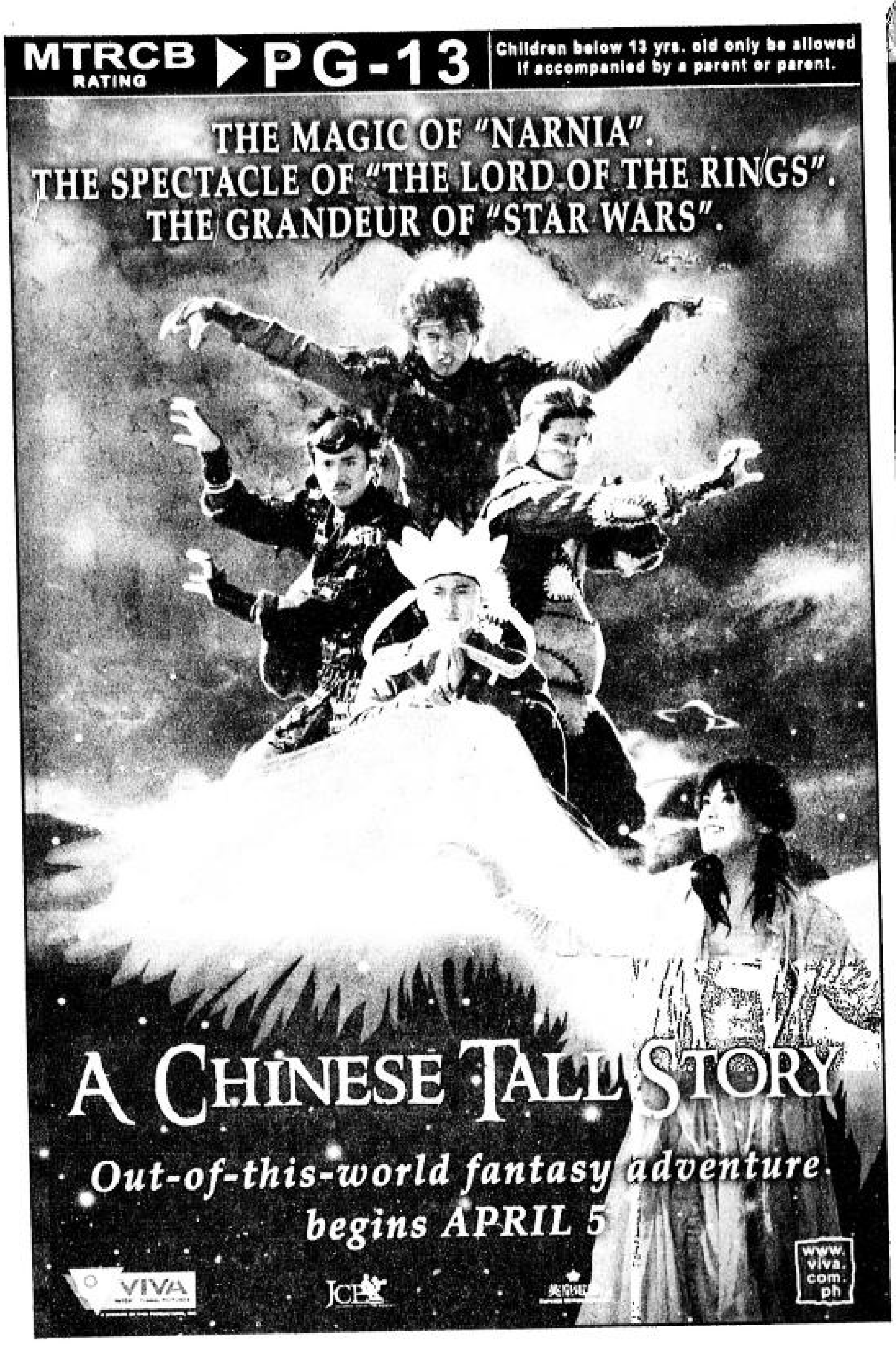
LOS ANGELES—George Clooney's swank Oscar swag bag has fetched thousands at auction.

Clooney donated the bag to the charity organization United Way, and it sold Wednesday for $45,100 (euro37,545) in an extended online auction that began March 21, UW spokesperson Sheila Consaul said.

The winner would only be identified as a family from Birmingham, Alabama, Consaul said.

The money will benefit the United Way's hurricane response and relief recovery fund.

The bag given to presenters at the 78th Annual Academy Awards included a BlackBerry 8700c, a Kay Unger kimono and a cultured Tahitian-pearl necklace. *AP*



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② ICE AGE 2
MTRCB: GP
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③ BASIC INSTINCT 2
MTRCB: R-18
2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00 LMF

④ NANNY MCPHEE
MTRCB GP 2:00, 6:40
JUST FRIENDS
MTRCB R-13 4:20, 9:00

PREMIERE THEATRE VENOM
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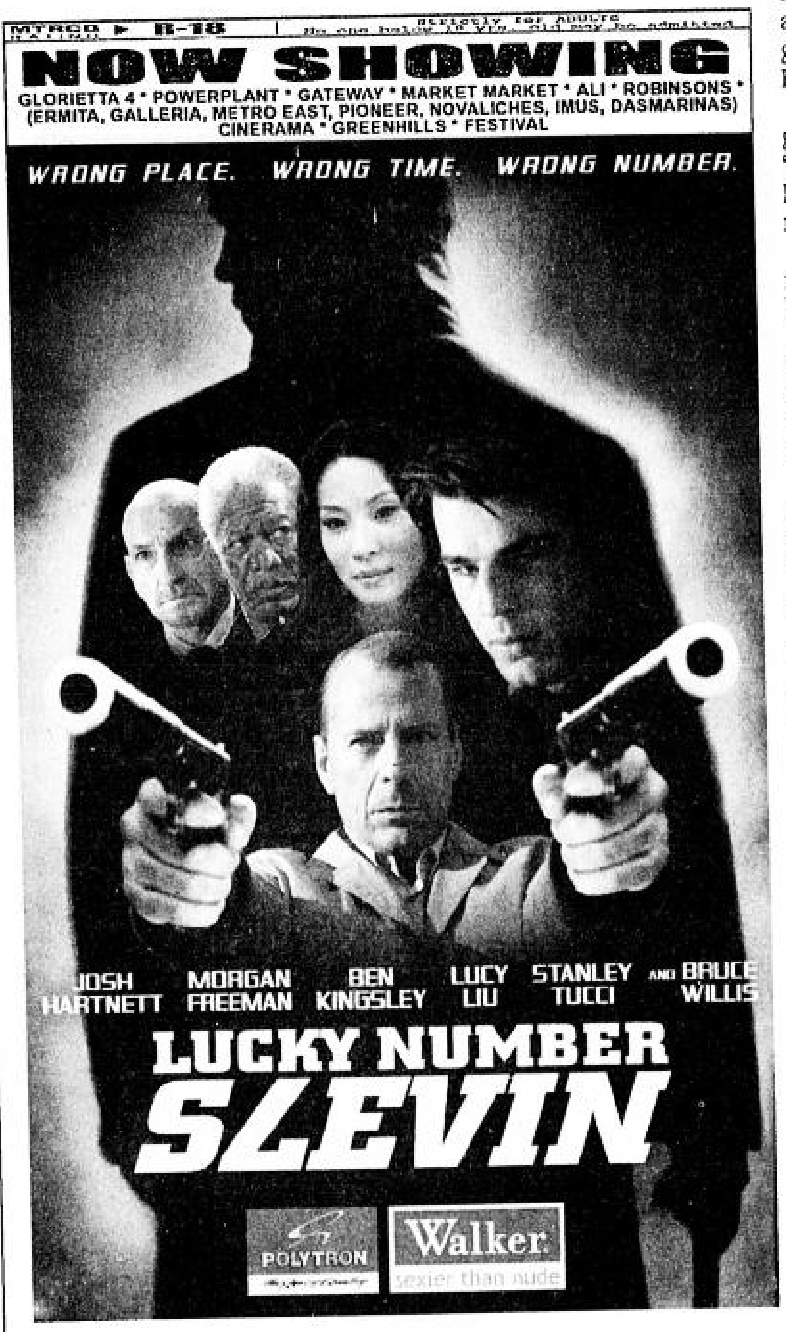

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GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
JUST FRIENDS 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00
VENOM 1:40 / 3:40 / 5:40 / 7:40 / 9:40
ICE AGE 2 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00
HOSTEL 7:35 / 9:40
ICE AGE 2 1:55 / 4:05 / 6:15 / 8:25
NANNY McPHEE 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10
SHE'S THE MAN 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40
V FOR VENDETTA 7:00 / 9:40
ULTRAVIOLET 12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00
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2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN 12:00 R3 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40
3 BASIC INSTINCT 2 12:10 / 2:50 / 5:30 / 8:10
4 ICE AGE 2 12:15 R4 / 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35
VENOM 12:40 / 2:40 / 4:40 / 6:40 / 8:40
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THE GOOD GIRLS VERSUS THE BAD BOYS

OPENS APRIL 5

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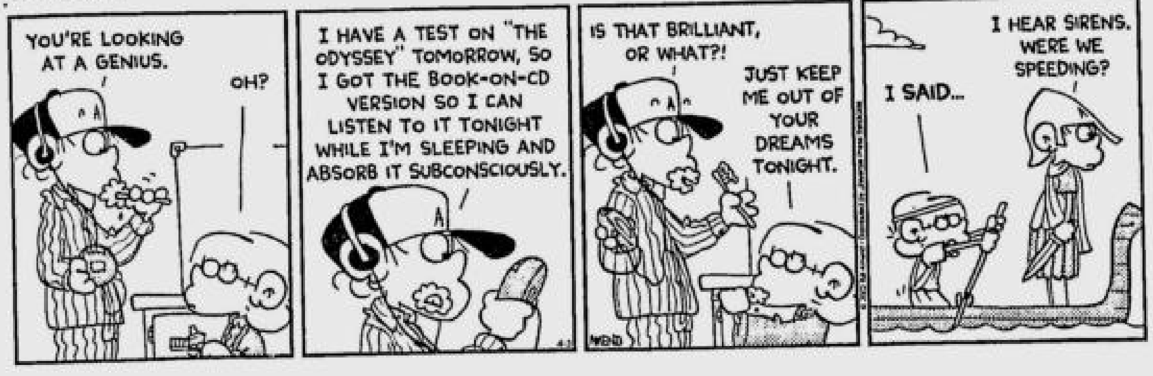
FEAR NO MAN

BANDIDAS

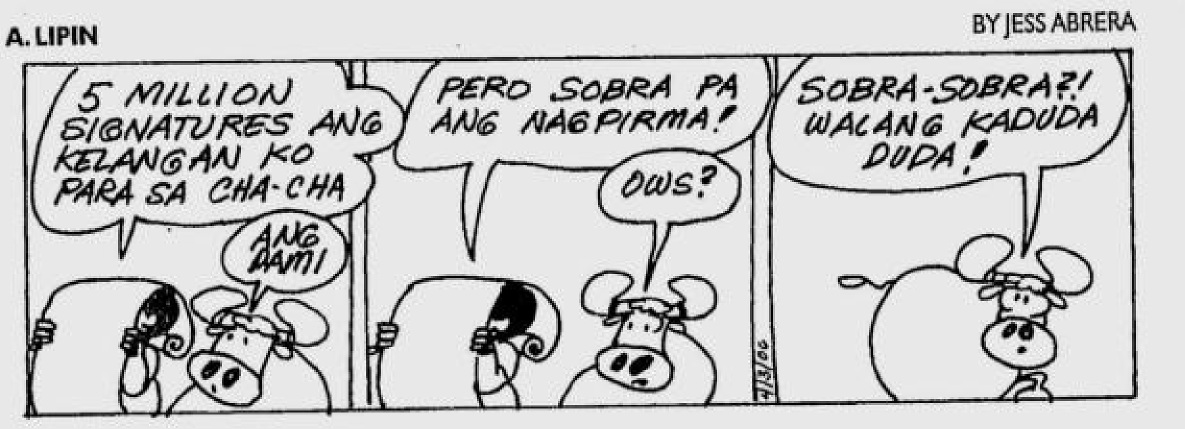
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


YOU'RE LOOKING AT A GENIUS.
OH?
I HAVE A TEST ON "THE ODYSSEY" TOMORROW, SO I GOT THE BOOK-ON-CD VERSION SO I CAN LISTEN TO IT TONIGHT WHILE I'M SLEEPING AND ABSORB IT SUBCONSCIOUSLY.
IS THAT BRILLIANT, OR WHAT?!
JUST KEEP ME OUT OF YOUR DREAMS TONIGHT.
I SAID...
I HEAR SIRENS. WERE WE SPEEDING?

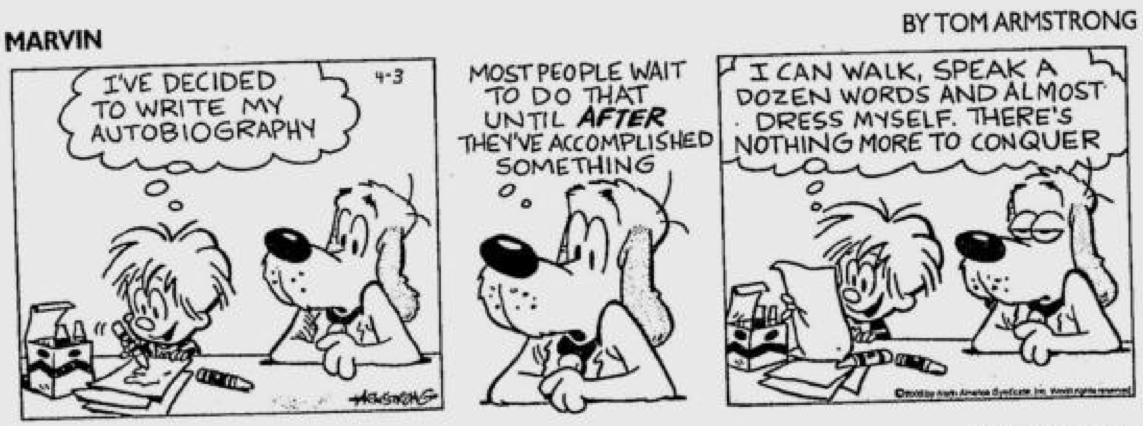
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


5 MILLION SIGNATURES ANG KELANGAN KO PARA SA CHA-CHA
ANG DAMI
PERO SOBRA PA ANG NAGPIRMA!
OWS?
SOBRA-SOBRA?! WALANG KADUDA DUDA!
4/3/06

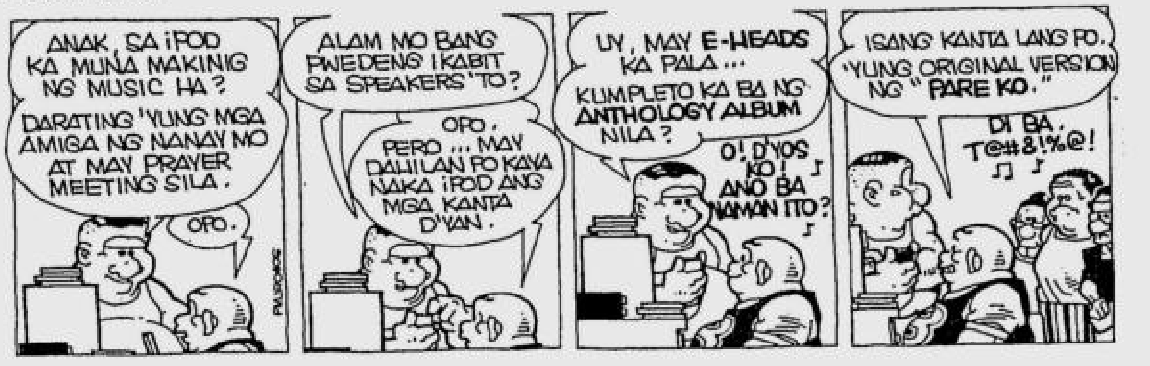
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I'VE DECIDED TO WRITE MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY
4-3
MOST PEOPLE WAIT TO DO THAT UNTIL AFTER THEY'VE ACCOMPLISHED SOMETHING
I CAN WALK, SPEAK A DOZEN WORDS AND ALMOST DRESS MYSELF. THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO CONQUER

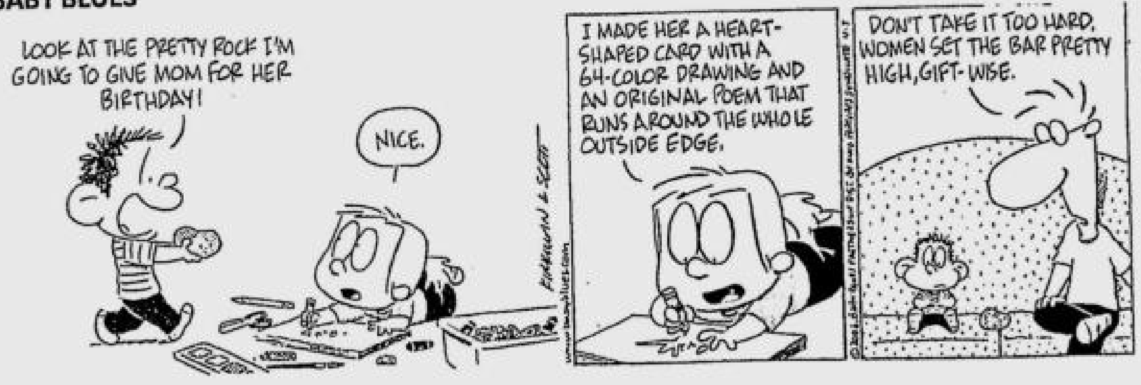
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANAK, SA iPOD KA MUNA MAKINIG NG MUSIC HA?
DARATING 'YUNG MGA AMIGA NG NANAY MO AT MAY PRAYER MEETING SILA.
OPO.
ALAM MO BANG PWEDENG IKABIT SA SPEAKERS 'TO?
OPO, PERO ... MAY DAHILAN PO KAYA NAKA iPOD ANG MGA KANTA D'YAN.
UY, MAY E-HEADS KA PALA...
KUMPLETO KA BA NG ANTHOLOGY ALBUM NILA?
O! D'YOS KO! ANO BA NAMAN ITO?
ISANG KANTA LANG PO. 'YUNG ORIGINAL VERSION NG "PARE KO."
DI BA. T@#&!%@!

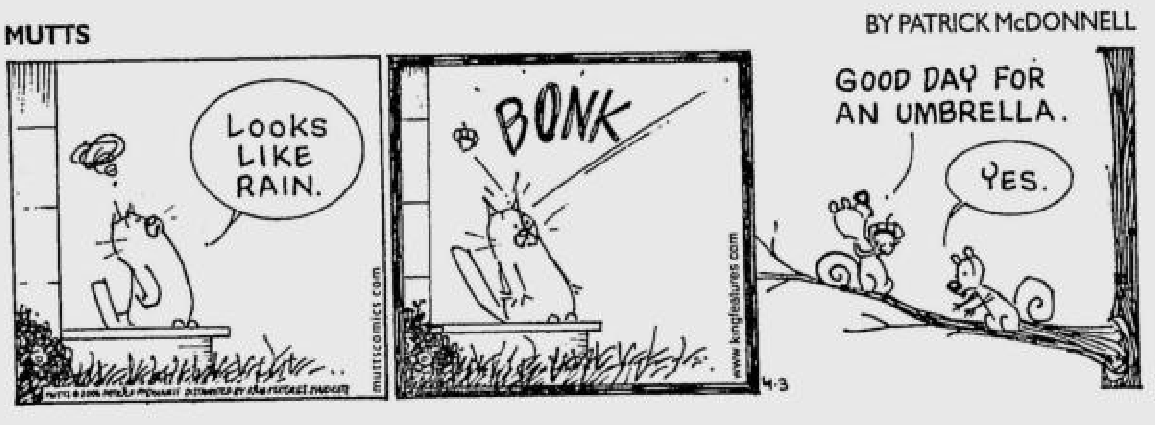
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


LOOK AT THE PRETTY ROCK I'M GOING TO GIVE MOM FOR HER BIRTHDAY!
NICE.
I MADE HER A HEART-SHAPED CARD WITH A 64-COLOR DRAWING AND AN ORIGINAL POEM THAT RUNS AROUND THE WHOLE OUTSIDE EDGE.
DON'T TAKE IT TOO HARD. WOMEN SET THE BAR PRETTY HIGH, GIFT-WISE.

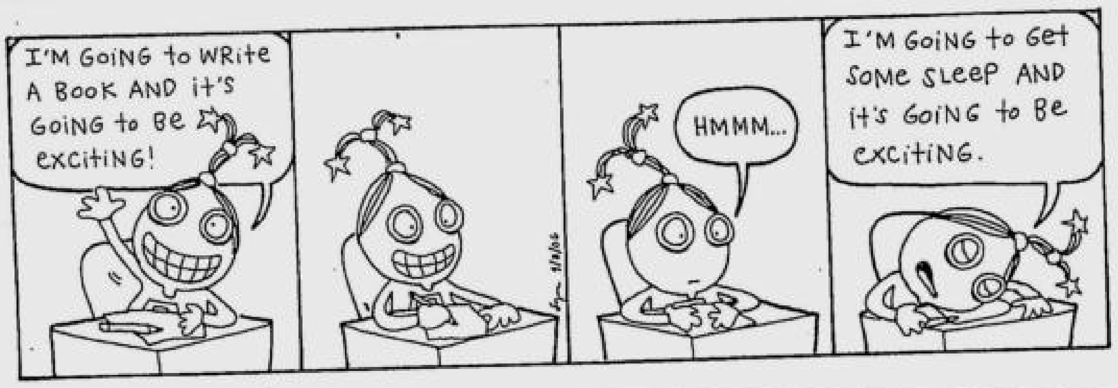
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


LOOKS LIKE RAIN.
BONK
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
4-3
GOOD DAY FOR AN UMBRELLA.
YES.

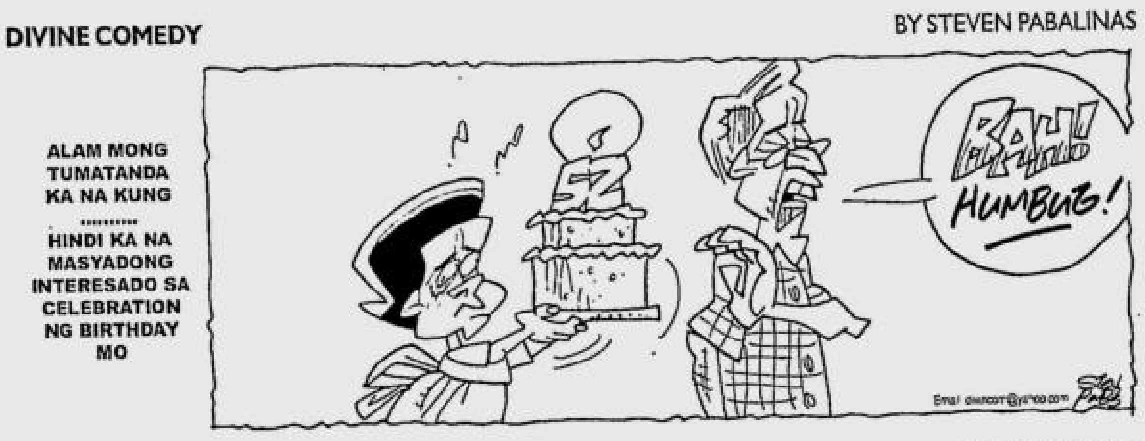
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'M GOING to WRite A BOOK AND it'S GOING to BE exCiTiNG!
HMMM...
I'M GOING to GET SOME SLEEP AND it's GOING to BE exCiTiNG.

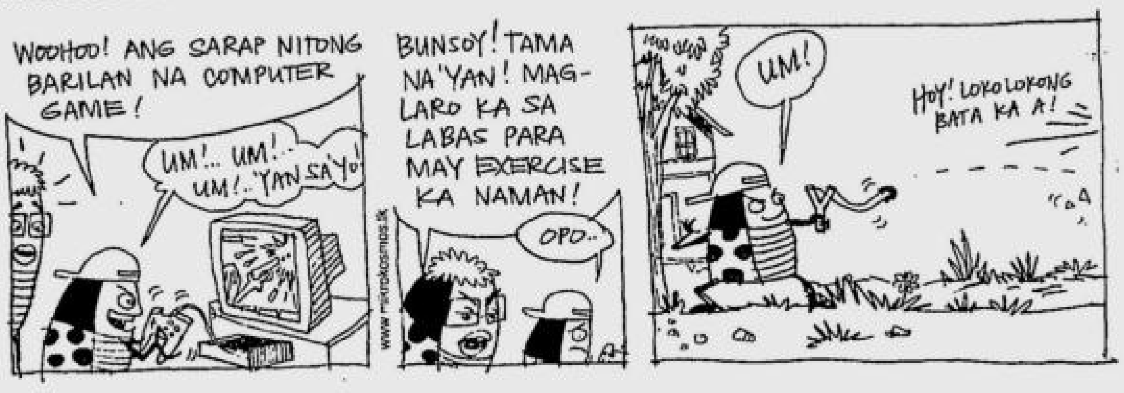
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ALAM MONG TUMATANDA KA NA KUNG
....
HINDI KA NA MASYADONG INTERESADO SA CELEBRATION NG BIRTHDAY MO
52
BAH! HUMBUG!

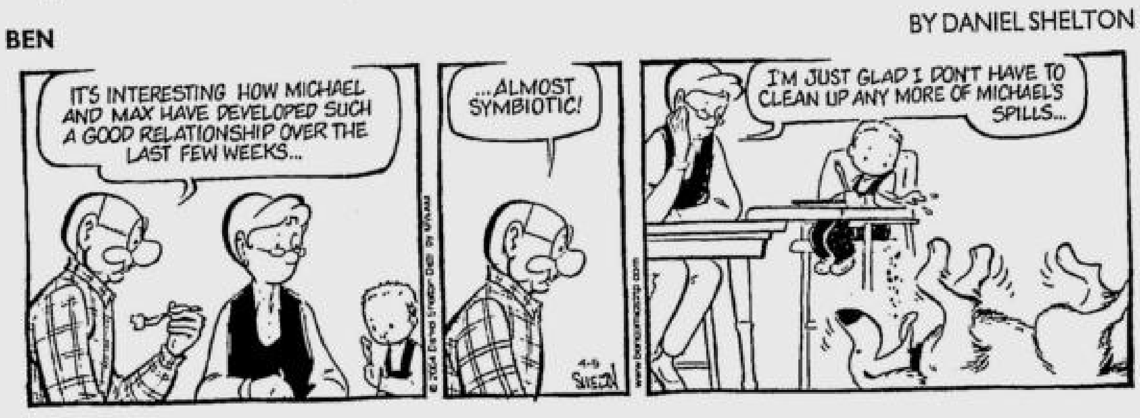
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


WOOHOO! ANG SARAP NITONG BARILAN NA COMPUTER GAME!
UM!.. UM!.. UM!.. 'YAN SA'YO!
BUNSOY! TAMA NA 'YAN! MAG-LARO KA SA LABAS PARA MAY EXERCISE KA NAMAN!
OPO..
www.mikrokosmos.tk
UM!
HOY! LOKOLOKONG BATA KA A!

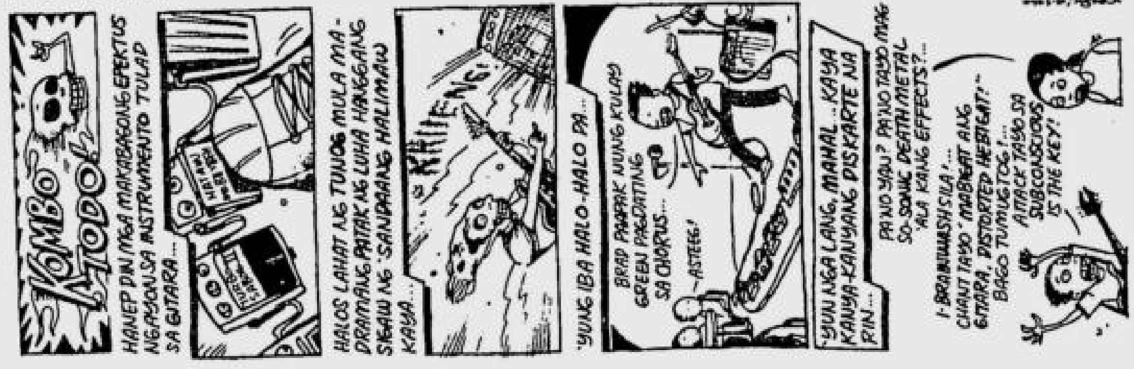
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


IT'S INTERESTING HOW MICHAEL AND MAX HAVE DEVELOPED SUCH A GOOD RELATIONSHIP OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS...
...ALMOST SYMBIOTIC!
I'M JUST GLAD I DON'T HAVE TO CLEAN UP ANY MORE OF MICHAEL'S SPILLS...

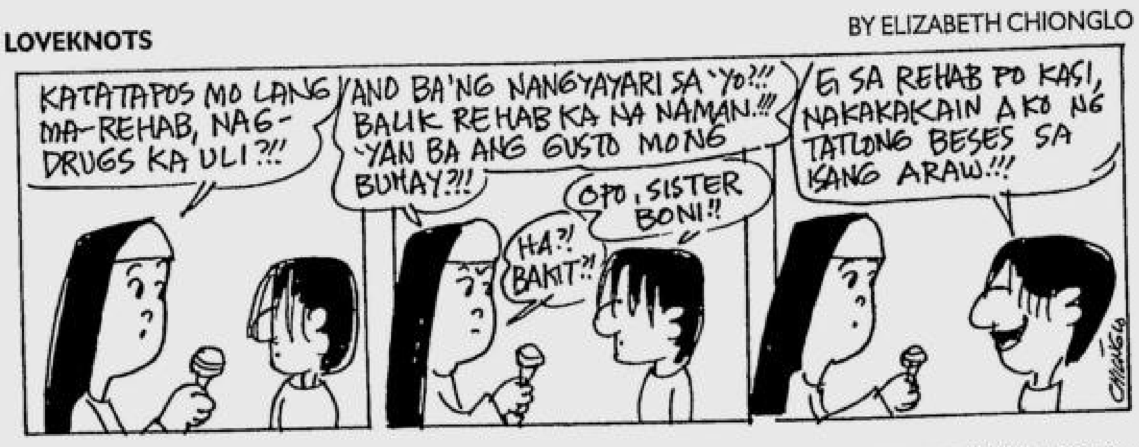
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


KOMBO KATODO!
HANEP DIN MGA MAKABAGONG EPEKTUS NGAYON SA INSTRUMENTO TULAD SA GITARA...
HALOS LAHAT NG TUNOG MULA MA-DRAMANG PATAK NG LUHA HANGGANG SIGAW NG 'SANDAANG HALIMAW' KAYA...
KRIIIENG!
'YUNG IBA HALO-HALO PA...
BRAD PAARAK NUNG KULAY GREEN PAGDATING SA CHORUS...
ASTEEG!
'YUN NGA LANG, MAHAL... KAYA KANYA-KANYANG DISKARTE NA RIN...
PANO 'YAN? PANO TAYO MAG-SO-SONIC DEATH METAL 'ALA KANG EFFECTS?...
I-BRAINWASH SILA!... CHANT TAYO 'MABIGAT ANG GITARA, DISTORTED HEBIGAT!' BAGO TUMUGTOG!... ATTACK TAYO SA SUBCONSCIOUS IS THE KEY!

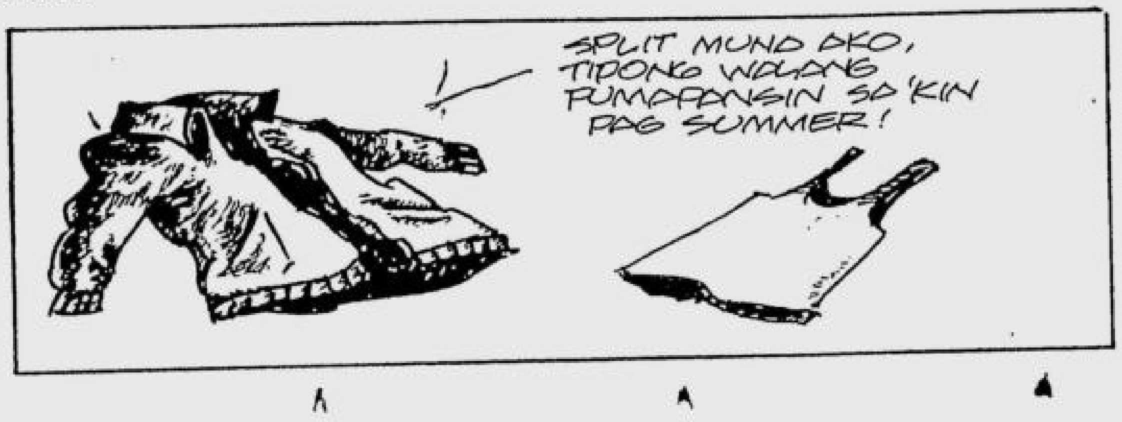
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


KATATAPOS MO LANG MA-REHAB, NAG-DRUGS KA ULI?!!
ANO BA'NG NANGYAYARI SA 'YO?!! BALIK REHAB KA NA NAMAN!!! 'YAN BA ANG GUSTO MONG BUHAY?!!
HA?! BAKIT?!
OPO, SISTER BONI!!
E SA REHAB PO KASI, NAKAKAKAIN AKO NG TATLONG BESES SA ISANG ARAW!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SPLIT MUNA AKO, TIPONG WALANG PUMAPANSIN SA'KIN PAG SUMMER!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You never do anything halfway. You're an extremely committed individual. Nevertheless, people find you lighthearted, easygoing and good-natured. You might even appear unassuming. You're laid-back and fun-loving. But then you understand human nature, and you're never afraid to go after what you want. The year ahead is wonderfully social! Expect fun times and perhaps new partnerships.
Birthdate of: Jane Goodall, scientist; Marsha Mason, actress; Marlon Brando, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Avoid arguments with relatives, especially siblings, today. You're tempted to get involved. That's because you identify strongly with your beliefs today.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're very high-energy today when it comes to making money. No doubt, you have the same high energy when it comes to spending money as well. Fortunately, your sign is never foolish with money. (You practically mint the stuff.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today the Moon is perfectly lined up with fiery Mars, and they're both in your sign. This makes you extremely emotional and energetic! People will notice this about you, that's for sure.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You have some very intense, almost secretive feelings that you prefer to keep to yourself today. You feel very private about something. Whatever it is, it matters a lot to you.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You can really rouse the troops now! Your enthusiasm for something will carry the day. People are ready to follow you anywhere.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You will definitely do something today that attracts attention to yourself. It might be brief; nevertheless, it will happen. Be prepared for this. Think about how you look.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a wonderful day to make plans to study more, travel somewhere or talk to people who are far away. You have a lot of energy to do this. You're also very enthusiastic.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): A woman might give you a gift today. Somehow you stand to benefit from the wealth of others, especially females, such as female relatives, for example.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Conversations with partners and close friends are extremely intense today. That's because your Moon is involved, and the Moon is all about feelings and emotions.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You have high energy at work today. You will definitely get a lot done. Do not make judgments about co-workers who might not feel as energetic as you do.

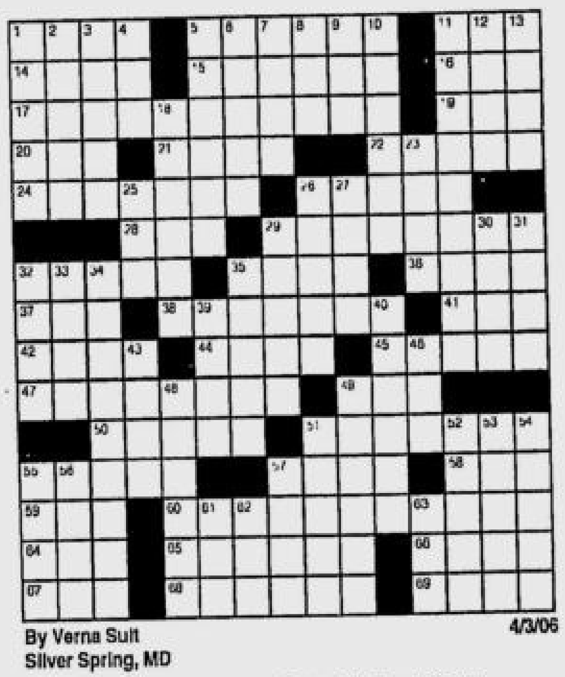
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is definitely a saucy, flirtatious day! You're in the mood to play. You're also in the mood to enjoy active sports. Rah rah!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're a whirlwind of energy at home today. Although you can get a lot done, you might also create conflict within the family. Don't be opinionated: Be loving and patient.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Sleeper spy
5 Double-check text
11 Duran Duran song
14 Surefire shots
15 Early space program
16 Byrnes of "77 Sunset Strip"
17 Fictional leak-stopper
19 Letters for 1051
20 The Greatest
21 Costa __
22 Playwright Edward
24 Pointed windows
26 Feed banqueters
28 Horse staple
29 Spaghetti sauce
32 Namely
35 Dynamic start?
36 Burden
37 Osaka sash
38 This puzzle's theme
41 Actress Ruby
42 Male progeny
44 Rorschach image
45 Extreme
47 Inciting rebellion
49 FDR group
50 Actor Feldman
51 Comic strip drudge
55 Donna lead-in
57 Little harbor
58 Red or Coral
59 Popular ISP
60 Two-rope jumping
64 Chick
65 Consequence
66 Eur. def. assn.
67 Tennessee twosome
68 Mall units
69 Theater award

DOWN
1 Taj __
2 Florida city
3 Bolshevik man
4 Tee preceder
5 Hen's tooth, e.g.
6 Heroic stories
7 Author Jaffe
8 Moose's cousin
9 Pub potable
10 Conductor Antal
11 __ van Rijn
12 Inactive
13 Garfield's pal
18 Save your __!
23 Comic Jay
25 Ho __ Minh
26 Jewel weight
27 Elvis __ Presley
29 Honeydew, e.g.
30 Sorry one
31 Not in port
32 Pitch
33 Hautboy
34 Alternative energy sources
35 Metal mix
39 Funeral info
40 Did a Burr-Hamilton
43 Thailand, once
46 Sci. workplace
48 Exchanges
49 Fasteners for Rosie
51 "La __ Vita"
52 Cornerstone abbr.
53 Belly muscles
54 Nevada resort
55 Side of a leaf
56 Motley horse
57 "Breaker-breaker" buddy
61 Frequently, in verse
62 E.T.'s transport
63 Numero __



By Verna Suit
Silver Spring, MD

4/3/06

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

E	N	I	G	M	A	■	A	N	A	P	E	S	T	S
S	E	N	S	E	S	■	M	O	N	R	O	V	I	A
P	A	V	A	N	S	■	I	D	I	O	L	E	C	T
O	R	E	■	D	U	E	T	S	■	M	I	L	K	Y
U	N	S	E	E	M	L	Y	■	B	I	T	T	E	R
S	E	T	T	L	E	D	■	R	A	S	H	E	R	S
A	S	E	A	■	■	E	R	A	S	E	S	■	■	■
L	S	D	■	S	C	R	A	P	E	D	■	C	O	B
■	■	■	B	U	L	L	E	T	■	■	S	A	V	E
P	A	G	E	B	O	Y	■	O	R	P	I	N	E	S
A	T	L	A	S	T	■	P	R	A	E	T	O	R	S
S	T	O	K	E	■	B	O	S	K	Y	■	P	R	E
T	U	B	E	R	O	U	S	■	I	O	N	I	U	M
E	N	E	R	V	A	T	E	■	S	T	E	E	L	E
D	E	S	S	E	R	T	S	■	H	E	A	D	E	R

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4/3/06

FEEDBACK

Why, Martin?

From Leli Amparo (leliamparo@yahoo.com), United Arab Emirates:

Martin Nievera is no longer as famous as he used to be. Besides, he left Philippine show business because he wanted to make it big in the US. What happened? Did he fail there? But in fairness to him, why should he want to stay in a show where few of the cast members can carry a tune? Why not just go to the other network, where he can be with real singers like himself?

Thanks, Piolo

From Gel Alvarado (alvara32@msu.edu) 2015 Pleasantview Ave, Lansing, Michigan, USA:

It's very inspiring to read about Piolo Pascual's relationship with his mom. My mother and I are not close, but whenever I read or hear stories like this, I become hopeful that our relationship will someday improve, too. You touch many lives just by sharing these wonderful stories. Thank you, and let's have more of these.

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777

Cinema	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G1 GLORIETTA 1	ULTRAVIOLET	MOMENTS OF LOVE	ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	BASIC INSTINCT 2			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	JUST FRIENDS	MOMENTS OF LOVE	THX ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN 12:50, 3:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	RENT	VENOM	ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	BASIC INSTINCT 2
GB1 GREENBELT 1	JUST FRIENDS	BASIC INSTINCT 2					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	THX ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	THX ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	BASIC INSTINCT 2 1:20, 3:54, 6:10, 8:35, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	RENT 1:10, 3:45, 6:20, 8:55, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	JUST FRIENDS 1:20, 3:20, 5:20, 7:20, 9:20, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	JUST FRIENDS	MOMENTS OF LOVE	VENOM		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	BASIC INSTINCT 2	VENOM	MOMENTS OF LOVE			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	MOMENTS OF LOVE	VENOM	JUST FRIENDS	BASIC INSTINCT 2	ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN		

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm
Greenbelt - 752 4853; from 11am to 12mn
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

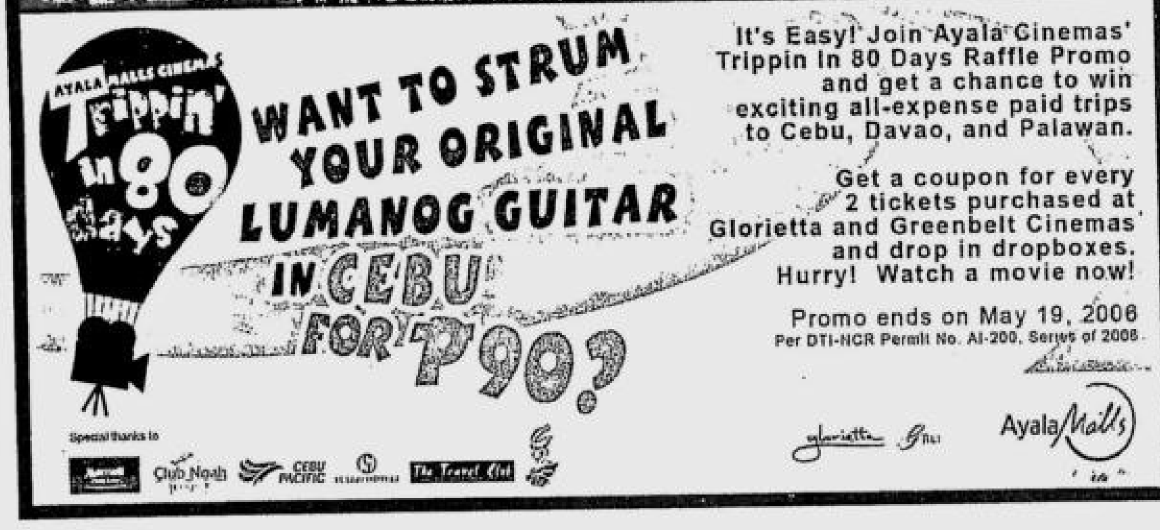
GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
BPI Installment Madness March 15 to 31, 2006	Anson's Emporium Exhibit March 12 to 31, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	**MARKET! MARKET!**
Child Development Center of Cebu's Culminating Activities March 30, 2006	Levi's Engineered Freedom Park April 1 & 2, 2006

GREENBELT
Ayala Museum Summer Workshop Sampler
April 1, 2006 - Greenbelt 3 Park

Onstage
Repertory Philippines presents 7 NG UMAGA
at REP's Globe Theater - March 24, 25, 26, 31, April 1, 2, 7, 8, 9
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM
Registration is now ongoing for Ayala Museum's Summer Art Festival Workshop 2006
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

RENT
No day but today
525,600 minutes
How do you measure...
The much awaited film version of the award-winning broadway musical
Last Full Show: Special screening for RENTHEADS. Singing will be allowed.
NOW SHOWING EXCLUSIVELY AT GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS



It's Easy! Join Ayala Cinemas' Trippin In 80 Days Raffle Promo and get a chance to win exciting all-expense paid trips to Cebu, Davao, and Palawan.

Get a coupon for every 2 tickets purchased at Glorietta and Greenbelt Cinemas and drop in dropboxes. Hurry! Watch a movie now!

Promo ends on May 19, 2006
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. AI-200, Series of 2006

TIMEZONE celebrates DISNEY
POWERCARD
FUN BEACH
COLLECT ALL SIX!
Disney Fun Beach Powercard Collection
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LIMITED RELEASE ONLY, COLLECTIBLE, NON-RELOADABLE
These collectible Powercards are available for P150. This shall be inclusive of P125 worth of game load plus 3 free games
www.timezonegames.com
Available at all Timezone Powercard-operated branches

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Monday, April 3, 2006
Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network
American Idol
Wed-Thurs-Fri 10pm
ABC
Iba Tayo!
ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)		Speed		TNA Impact		Sentro	How Clean Is Your House	ABC Action Movies				Big News	Fear Factor		Totoo TV	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Teens	TV Patrol World		Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Princess Lulu	Pinoy Big Brother		OK Fine Whatever			Insider
AXN							E Buzz	Cold Squad		Amazon		Max Exposure (Season II)		The 4400 (Season 2)		Lost (Season II)		House	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Tom & Jerry Show		Baby Looney Tunes	Codename: Kids Next Door	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		Powerpuff Girls		Mucha Lucha	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinemax			The Great Race (3:45 PM)						Shadow Of Doubt (6:20 PM)			Freddy vs. Jason			Jawbreaker			Reality Bites	
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Crime/Suspense		What Should You Do?		Law & Order Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Mastermind	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Crossing Jordan		Bones		The Closer	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Ad Attack/Un-Bakable Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Black Hole High	So Little Time	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '05 Men's Sudden Death 7-Ball		Pool Spectacular World Pool Masters '03 Holland		X-Games Files '04	X-Games Files '04	Extreme Programming Sports Mania		High School Basketball: Mc Donald's All-Am		Sportscenter Asia		Sportscenter Asia	Major League Baseball Thurs: Devil Rays @ Yankees				
ETC		Project Runway		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Project Runway		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		ET Weekend		Joan Of Arcadia	
EWTN	Benediction And Devotion Encore	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Bible Treasure Chest	Image Of God	St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Voices On Virtue	EWTN Gallery	The Catholic Faith & Vatican II	Sunday Night With (Bro) Fr. Benedict Groeschel		Threshold Of Hope		Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Defending Life	Catholic Compass	
Fox News		Fox Report Sunday		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In	Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royale Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Majika	Encantadia	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Jewel In The Palace/Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi		
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	Child Of Our Time					Ladies Man	Bewitched	The Nanny	Strong Medicine		Judging Amy					Mcleod's Daughters IV		Strong Medicine
HBO			Fresh Horses (3:45 PM)				The Neverending Story II Next Chapter			Bad Boys				Connie and Carla			Escape From L.A.		
Hero TV	Yakitate Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Beyblade	Crush Gear Turbo	Gamburingar	Gosaurer	Raijin-Oh	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh	Yakitate Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Gosaurer	Raijin-Oh
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Home Shopping Network		ME TV		PTA Best Of The Philippines		Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Bottomline		Afterburn		X-Men Evolution	Jack Yard	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Family Guy	The Late Show David Letterman		Jack In The Box			
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	E! Extra Jackie Collins Presents: Hitched In Hollywood		NY Fashion Week	Life & Style		Radical Sabbatical	Genuine Article	It's Good To Be	Style Star
MTV Philippines	Rockola		Chart Attack		Viva La Bam	Pop Inc.		2006 MAA Nominee Specials				Massive	Get Spotted	TRL		The 70's House	Wild N' Out	Homecoming	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXILOG		Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten				Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic	Africa From The Ground Up	Ultimate Survivor		Sea Of Snakes		Wildlife Diary	Planet Wild	Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		Terrorism Week: Bioterror Alert/ Nat Geographic Specials "Animal Aging Secrets"		In The Womb		Journey Into Amazonia: Waterworlds/The Land Reborn/The Big Top	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alas	Dyos Ko, Mahal Ko Ba Siya?	Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition		Dial M		Bantay OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			My Pledge Of Love		Pusong [illegible]				Fight Night 5				Ang Probinsyano				Tumakas Ka Sa Mundong Makasalanan		
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zenki	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Irene	Mars	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	H3O Hahaha...Over!		News On Q	Liga Ng Kababaihan		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9	TV Shopping					Global Window		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Scare Tactics	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Global Window	Cargo For Truth	
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		SBN Music Video		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng [illegible]		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports				WTA Dubai Duty Free Finals					GWS 11-2006	Sagupaan		NBA Game Clippers @ Kings					Sportsdesk	FIVB WGCC ITA vs. CHN (men's)	
Sports Plus					FIFA Preview Series 7	Ultimate Fighting Championship				Arena Football League						BellSouth Classic Final			
Star Movies				Hoosiers				Chupacabra: Dark Seas			Hush (7:25 PM)			Starsky & Hutch			Sister Act (10:45PM)		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	My Wife And Kids	Everybody Loves Raymond/Still Standing (Series 3)	King Of Queens	Frasier	Monk		Seinfeld	My Wife And Kids
Studio 23	Bewitched	Masked Rider Ryuki				Batman Beyond	Dragon Booster	Spirits	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	The Swan Season 2		Charmed (8:20 PM)	Lost (9:10 PM)		News Central	The West Wing		Travel Time

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

DON Cheadle

'Rwanda'—a point of order

KIGALI—RWANDA'S president said last week the inspiration for the Hollywood film "Hotel Rwanda" does not deserve the hero status accorded him for saving Tutsis during the country's 1994 genocide.

Speaking to reporters a week before the 12th anniversary of the start of the mass slaughter, President Paul Kagame questioned the role that hotel manager Paul Rusesabagina actually played in the early days of the killings.

Distortion

"Picking Rusesabagina as a hero… distorts our history," Kagame said just days after the latest movie about the genocide—"Shooting Dogs"—premiered in Kigali, rekindling memories ahead of the April 6 commemoration.

"Heroes cannot be made by other people, people here in Rwanda should be the ones to search out who those heroes are," he said, adding that he needed "to be convinced of the acts Rusesabagina was involved in that constitute heroism."

Kagame, a Tutsi whose rebel army ousted the Hutu government responsible for the massacres, suggested that Rusesabagina, a Hutu, had demanded cash from at least some of those he is credited with altruistically saving in the film.

"He is said to have collected money from people to save them," Kagame said.

In the film, Rusesabagina, played by actor Don Cheadle, is portrayed as a selfless humanitarian who saves more than a thousand minority Tutsis in the first days of the genocide in which some 800,000 people, mainly Tutsis, were killed by Hutu extremists.

Erroneous

While conceding that the Academy Award-nominated 2004 blockbuster had made many aware of the genocide, Kagame also complained that the movie gave the erroneous impression that Rusesabagina was solely responsible for rescuing Tutsis who had sought refuge at Kigali's Milles Collines Hotel.

Those in the hotel "did not survive because of Rusesabagina," but rather because of negotiations between the predominantly Hutu army, the Forces Armees Rwandaises (FAR) and Kagame's Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), he said, adding that the army had little interest in destroying the hotel, a well-known watering hole for Rwanda's elite. *AFP*

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For single purchase transaction only. Terms and conditions apply. Not applicable with other promos.

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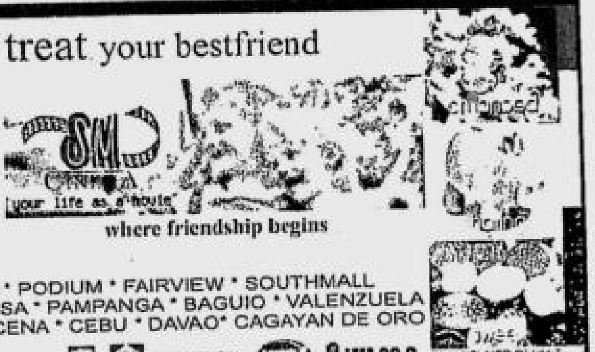

MEGAMALL * STA. MESA * MANILA * PODIUM * FAIRVIEW * SOUTHMALL
NORTH EDSA * SAN LAZARO * STA. ROSA * PAMPANGA * BAGUIO * VALENZUELA
MARILAO * MOLINO** BATANGAS * LUCENA * CEBU * DAVAO* CAGAYAN DE ORO

**Promo starts on April 15, 2006

MEDIA PARTNERS 96.3WRocK IFM 93.9

METRO MANILA

The PODIUM

ICE AGE 2
12:15 FS / 12:40 MF / 02:45
04:50 / 06:55 / 08:30LFS
09:00 LMF / 10:30 END

JUST FRIENDS
02:15 FS / 02:45 MF / 04:50
06:55 / 8:30LFS
09:00 LMF / 10:35 END

SM MEGACINEMA

1 16 BLOCKS
11:40FS / 12:00 MF
02:10 / 04:00LFS
04:20 LMF / 06:10 END
2 VENOM
3 ICE AGE 2
4 RESERVED
5 ULTRAVIOLET
6 ICE AGE 2
7 V FOR VENDETTA
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 JUST FRIENDS
11 NANNY McPHEE
12 SHE'S THE MAN

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2
5 ULTRAVIOLET
6 SHE'S THE MAN
7 JUST FRIENDS
8 VENOM

SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 VENOM
4 ULTRAVIOLET

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

1 SHE'S THE MAN
2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 NANNY McPHEE
4 ULTRAVIOLET
5 JUST FRIENDS
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE
7 VENOM
8 ICE AGE 2
9 ICE AGE 2
10 MOMENTS OF LOVE
11 FEARLESS
12 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY STA. MESA

1 ICE AGE 2
2 JUST FRIENDS
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 SHE'S THE MAN
5 ULTRAVIOLET
6 FINAL DESTINATION 3
7 NANNY McPHEE
8 VENOM
9 V FOR VENDETTA
10 SHAGGY DOG

SM CITY BICUTAN

1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 VENOM
4 ULTRAVIOLET

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

1 ICE AGE 2
2 NANNY McPHEE
3 VENOM
4 SHE'S THE MAN
5 JUST FRIENDS
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY MANILA

1 SHE'S THE MAN
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 ICE AGE 2
5 NANNY McPHEE
6 ICE AGE 2
7 VENOM
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3
9 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10 MOMENTS OF LOVE
11 16 BLOCKS
12 JUST FRIENDS

SM CITY SOUTHMALL

1 ICE AGE 2
2 ICE AGE 2
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 VENOM
5 SHE'S THE MAN
6 JUST FRIENDS
7 FINAL DESTINATION 3
8 NANNY McPHEE
9 ULTRAVIOLET

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA

1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 ICE AGE 2
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 VENOM

SM CITY SUCAT

1 VENOM
2 ICE AGE 2
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ULTRAVIOLET

SM CENTER Stage EVENT CALENDAR

Parokya ni Edgar

APRIL 7, 2006
FRIDAY • 8:30 PM
SM NORTH EDSA
CINEMA 1
Tickets at
(P180 • P280 • P380)

Nina Beyond Limits

APRIL 8, 2006
SATURDAY • 8:30 PM
SM MEGAMALL
CINEMA 3
Tickets at
(P300 • P500 • P800)

Tickets available at TICKETWORLD 891-5610/ 891-9999

LUZON

SM CITY BAGUIO

1 FINAL DESTINATION 3
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 VENOM
4 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY MARILAO

1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ULTRAVIOLET
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY BATANGAS

1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 CRY WOLF
3 ICE AGE 2
4 16 BLOCKS

SM CITY BACOOR

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 ICE AGE 2
4 NANNY McPHEE
5 ULTRAVIOLET
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE
7 VENOM
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3

SM CITY STA. ROSA

1 VENOM
2 THE DARK
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY PAMPANGA

1 VENOM
2 ICE AGE 2
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 SHAGGY DOG
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY LUCENA

1 16 BLOCKS
2 ICE AGE 2
3 THE DARK
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

SM CITY MOLINO

1 ICE AGE 2
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 NANNY McPHEE
4 ULTRAVIOLET

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU

1 SYRIANA
12:00FS / 12:10 MF / 02:30
04:50 / 07:10 / 09:10 LFS
09:30 LMF / 10:55 END
2 ICE AGE 2
11:20FS / 11:30 MF / 01:30
3:30 / 05:30
07:30 / 09:05 LFS
09:30 LMF / 10:55 END
3 VENOM
11:20FS / 11:30 MF / 01:10
02:50 / 04:20 / 06:10
07:50 / 09:15 LFS
09:30 LMF / 10:55 END
4 V FOR VENDETTA
5 HOUSE OF FURY
6 BREAKING NEWS
7 MOMENTS OF LOVE
8 CASANOVA

SM CITY ILOILO

1 GLORY ROAD
2 ICE AGE 2
3 ICE AGE 2
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 SHAGGY DOG
7 RESERVED
8 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY DAVAO

1 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
2 ICE AGE 2
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 VENOM
5 HOUSE OF FURY
6 ICE AGE 2

SM CITY CAGAYAN

1 ICE AGE 2
2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 VENOM

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 ICE AGE 2 • THX
12.50 3:00 5:10 7:20 9:30
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
3 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
4 JUST FRIENDS
11:15 1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00
5 ICE AGE 2
11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
6 BASIC INSTINCT 2
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
7 NANNY MCPHEE
1.00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
8 VENOM
1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:45
9 SHE'S THE MAN
12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00
10 ULTRAVIOLET
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 ICE AGE 2
10:20 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
2 NANNY MCPHEE 12:00 1:50 3:40
ULTRAVIOLET 5:50 7:50 9:50
3 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
5 VENOM
10:20 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
6 JUST FRIENDS
12:00 2:00 4.00 6:00 8:00 9:50
7 BASIC INSTINCT 2
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 SHE'S THE MAN
1:00 3:00 5:00 7.00 9:00
2 ICE AGE 2
12.30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:15
3 BASIC INSTINCT 2
11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05
4 JUST FRIENDS
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
5 VENOM
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10
6 NANNY MCPHEE 1:00 3:00
ULTRAVIOLET 5:00 7:00 9:00
7 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
12:25 2:35 4:45 6:55 9:05
8 MOMENTS OF LOVE
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 BASIC INSTINCT 2
2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
3 JUST FRIENDS
4 VENOM
5 ICE AGE 2
6 MOMENTS OF LOVE

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 MOMENTS OF LOVE
2 ICE AGE 2
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 ICE AGE 2
2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
3 BASIC INSTINCT 2
4 VENOM

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MTRCB Rating: R18

STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907

1 ICE AGE 2
2 VENOM
3 HOUSE OF FURY
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 ICE AGE 2
2 16 BLOCKS
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 GLORY ROAD

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 ICE AGE 2
2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
3 ULTRAVIOLET
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 VENOM

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ICE AGE 2
4 VENOM

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 ICE AGE 2
2 COED SCANDAL
3 ULTRAVIOLET
4 VENOM
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-6270

1 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2
5 HOUSE OF FURY
6 VENOM

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 ICE AGE 2
2 SYRIANA
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 THE DARK
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 GLORY ROAD

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 GLORY ROAD
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 ICE AGE 2
5 DATE MOVIE
6 V FOR VENDETTA

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5: Venom

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2: Basic Instinct 2
3: Venom
4: Ice Age 2

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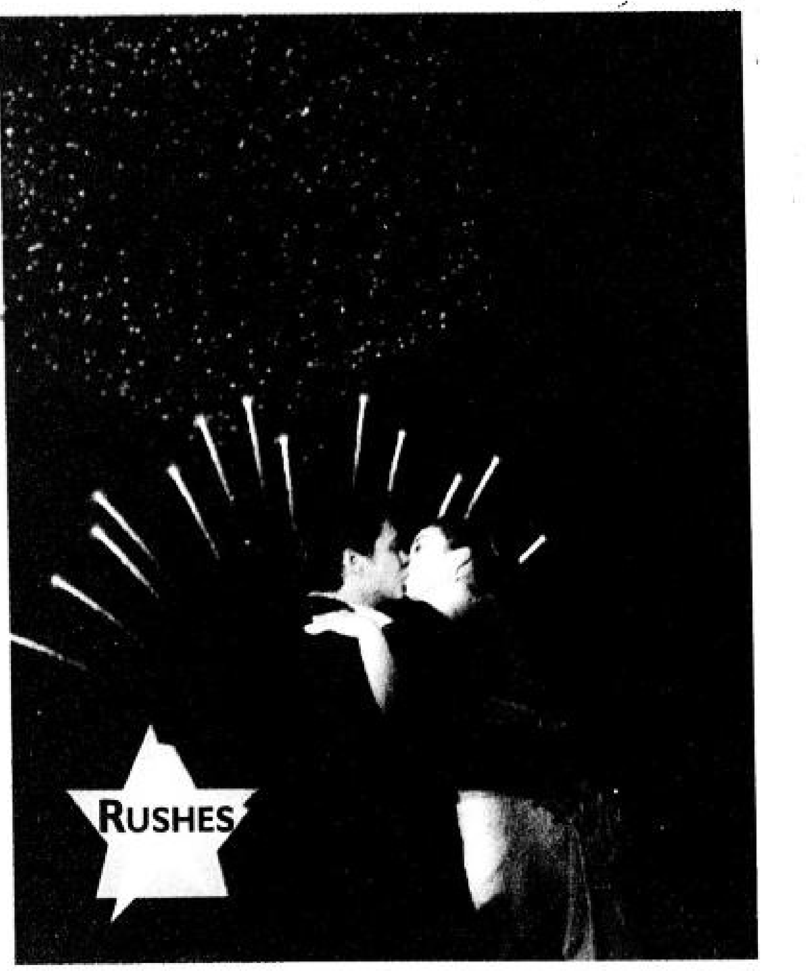
Ginoong Filipinas Mall Tour (Apr. 2) Iza Calzado (Apr. 9) Katrina Halili (Apr. 23) Metropolis Alabang
River Maya (Apr. 7) Center For Pop (Apr. 2, Apr. 23) Kamikazee (Apr. 22) Starmall Edsa

JULIANA PALERMO stepped out of a hotel and ran into **Cesar Montano** and his wife **Sunshine** and **Lucy Torres-Gomez**. Juliana instinctively bussed Lucy on the cheek, threw a sweet "Hi!" in Buboy's direction, then turned on her pretty heels, flipping her hair with her free hand. Like… did she see Shine at all?

IWA Moto



Kiss, hug, fireworks!

Claudine Barretto and **Raymart Santiago** kissed and hugged four times during their wedding rites in Tagaytay Highlands. And then they kissed and hugged some more during the reception.

Anne grows up

"Boys my age lack maturity," **Anne Curtis**, 21, says. About her boyfriend **Paolo Araneta**, 10 years her senior, she gushes, "He can guide me through life." The grown-up Anne talks about the relationship in the March issue of Mega Magazine.

ANNE Curtis

'Ice Age' fans

Show biz couples **Anthony** and **Maricel Pangilinan** and **Zoren Legaspi** and **Carmina Villaroel,** brought their kids to the special screening of 20th Century Fox's "Ice Ace 2: The Meltdown" at the Ayala Center in Makati City.

Are they mad?

Cherry Pie Picache has reportedly earned the ire of Vilmanians for portraying the mother of gay boys in "Manay Po." *Ate* Vi is supposedly set to star in a movie with a similar story line.

CHERRY Pie Picache

Out of sight…

"Pinoy Big Brother" housemate **Bianca Gonzalez's** boyfriend, TV director **Lino Cayetano,** is set to go to the United States to visit a grandmother—not because of rumors sparked by Bianca's closeness to another housemate, **Zanjoe Marudo.**

A word for mom

Pia Pilapil-Gonzalo put in a lot of good words for mom Pilar during the latter's book launch.

BIANCA Gonzalez

Iwa Moto, Nuts

Iwa Moto, one of StarStruck Batch 3's Final Four, joins GMA 7's "Nuts Entertainment" starting Wednesday. Catch her in the "Balakubak" portion. Yikes.

Isha to Isla

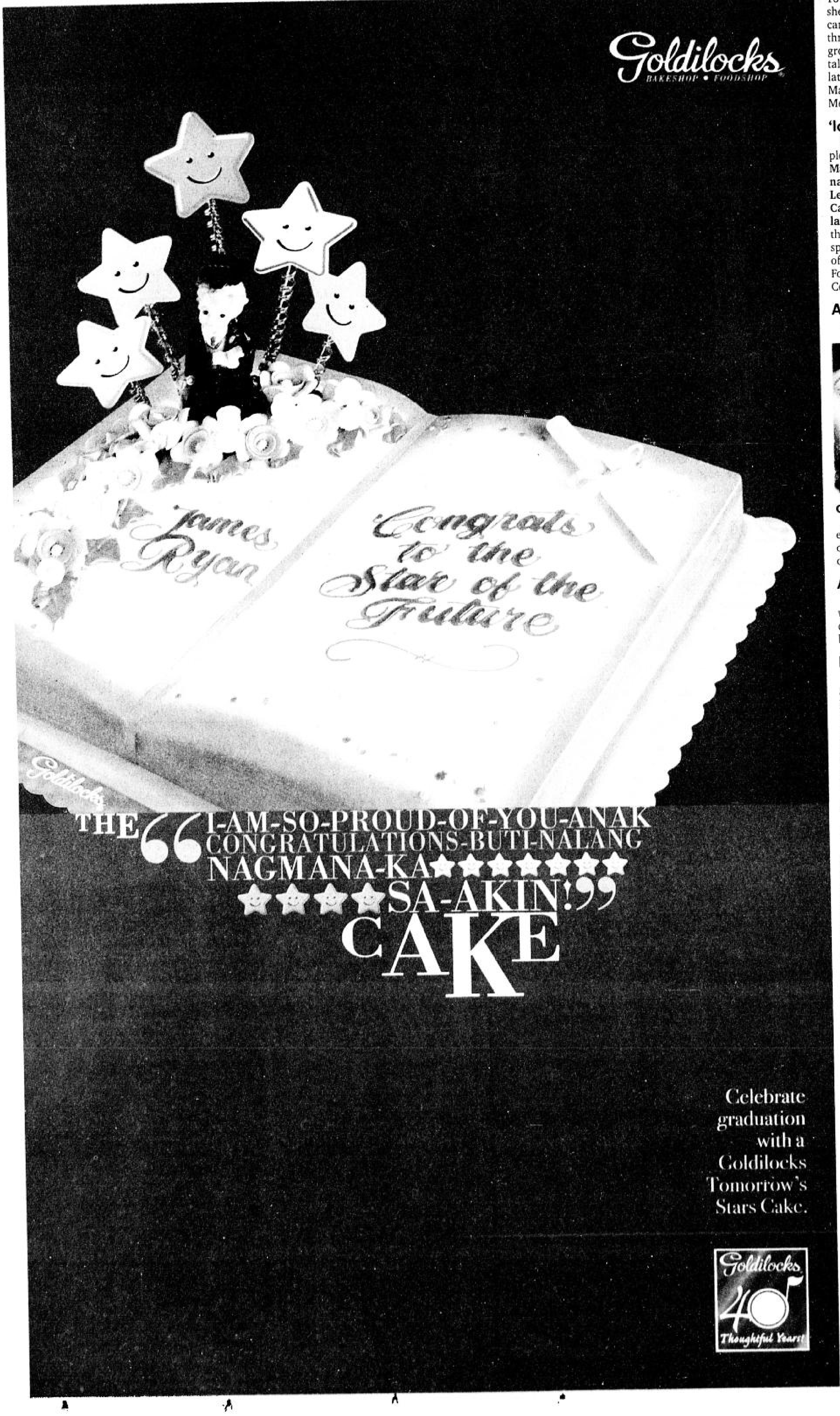
"I'm doing more of my original stuff now," says jazz singer **Isha,** who just released her second album, "Katakataka," under Isla, a division of Candid Records specializing in non-jazz stuff. What happened? It doesn't matter. "Katakataka" is quirky, playful and catchy. Something new, in other words—and thank goodness for that.

ZOREN and Carmina with their twins

In English, ha!

Comedian **Jaja Bolivar** says she often catches herself speaking like her character on "Wazzup! Wazzup!" called Kikiam. "I even argue with people in straight English!"

ISHA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THE "I-AM-SO-PROUD-OF-YOU-ANAK CONGRATULATIONS-BUTI-NALANG NAGMANA-KA SA-AKIN!" CAKE
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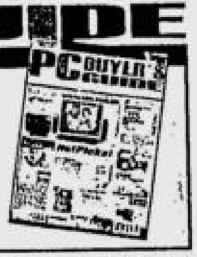

PC BUYER'S GUIDE
The No.1 Computer Magazine in the Philippines
2004 National Shoppers' Choice Awards

RP needs to do more to lure investors

AMAZONS OF MINDANAO
In a secluded village named Kilada in Matalam, North Cotabato, lives a group of women who could appropriately be called the "Amazons of Mindanao." By mastering new technologies and entrepreneurial skills, these new-age amazons are winning the wars of commerce and bringing development to their community. Teresita Mangimlas-Salido, Kagi Dina Ampuan-Ambel, and Lani Mangimlas, former members of the Women's State Revolutionary Committee of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), are now engaged in vegetable farming through various programs funded in part by the US Agency for International Development.

Study cites lessons from Thai experience

By Doris C. Dumlao

TAGAYTAY CITY—THE PHILIPPINES LAGS THAILand in attracting much-needed foreign capital due to huge gaps in infrastructure, investment perks and taxation, according to a study conducted by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines.

The comparative study, presented by Japan's bilateral delegation to the government during the Philippine Development Forum here, found out that while the Philippines was still sufficiently competitive in labor costs, Thailand was way ahead in terms of the general state of investment climate.

The study, conducted in 2005, covered five specific areas of most interest to investors: labor-related matters, investment incentives, tax system, infrastructure and foreign exchange control.

It said labor costs in the Philippines were competitive with that

RP NEEDS/ B6

GMA 7 hits 2005 profit target of ₱2B

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

GMA NETWORK INC. HAS ANnounced that it hit its 2005 net income target of P2 billion, or 34 percent higher than the P1.5 billion in 2004.

It said consolidated gross revenues grew 24 percent to P9.7 billion from P7.8 billion in 2004.

However, operating expenses also jumped 25 percent to P5.2 billion last year, driven primarily by higher production cost. The network fielded three big-budget and fantasy series or "telefantasyas" in 2005, including "Darna," "Encantadia" and "Sugo," compared with one in 2004.

New programs were also produced and aired on its free QTV Channel 11, which was launched in November last year. The promotions for QTV, the launching of GMA Pinoy TV, and the regional awareness campaigns of the network also contributed to the increase in operating expenses, the company said.

In 2005, GMA maintained its lead in Mega Manila TV ratings in all day parts, including the highly contested primetime block. As of February this year, GMA posted total day ratings of 18.4 percent versus ABS-CBN's 14.3 percent, according to data from ratings firm AGBNMR.

AGBNMR data also showed that as of February this year, 17 out of the top 30 TV programs were from GMA with the network's primetime programs occupying the top spots.

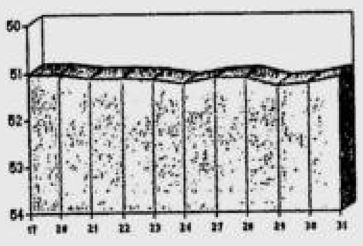
GMA Network's regional news programs in Iloilo, Cebu and Davao as well as its national primetime news program "24 Oras" also took the top spot in ratings in those areas.

GMA Network prepaid the balance of its five-year long term loan of P1.9 billion last February, nine months ahead of the scheduled due date of November 2005. Primarily using internally generated funds, GMA Network paid

GMA 7/ B6

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



MARCH

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱51.125 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 31, 2006

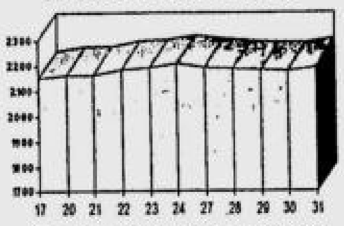
¥117.47 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 31, 2006

GOLD: $585.20-585.70
per ounce Hong Kong, March 31, 2006

STOCK MARKET

Consolidation seen to continue

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

STOCKS are expected to continue consolidating this week with a few spurts of buying with the implementation of a new index today.

AB Capital Securities wrote in a market advisory to clients that the market could have a positive bias as changes in the computation of the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) benchmark index takes effect using the free-float system, or available shares in the public.

"It will be the first week wherein we will be shifting to the more internationally acceptable free-float weighted index system. Gains will be aided by index fund purchases as fund managers scurry to acquire some quality issues, which were added to the index or whose weights have increased. This is done to make sure that fund returns are not out of line from the benchmark index," AB Capital Securities' Jovis Vistan wrote.

He added that trading might be lackluster at the start of the second quarter as most traders and investors get ready for the Lenten break.

"Besides the Lenten break, the market will also be dampened by less liquidity as we go into the tax payment season. On the macro picture, there isn't much to look forward to. The economic picture has been improving dramatically but the political situation remains fragile," Vistan wrote.

Profit-taking dominated last week's trading. After piercing a psychological resistance at 2,200, the Phisix, to be known starting today as PSEi, lost steam, giving up 12 points to close 0.5 percent lower week-on-week to 2,196.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

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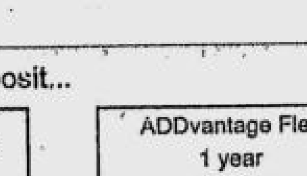
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PDF, ODA and chaotic economists

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Cielito F. Habito

THE DONOR COMMUNITY GATHered in Tagaytay late last week along with dozens of government officials and non-government development partners for the second annual Philippine Development Forum (PDF).

This meeting has evolved from what used to be commonly known since the late 1980s through the 1990s as the regular donor pledging session, more formally known as the Consultative Group (CG) Meeting.

True to its popular name, the highlight of the two-day meeting used to be the final session where the donors took turns to indicate how much grants and soft loans they were making available to the country in the year or so ahead.

The final tally, usually averaging around $1 billion to $2 billion, would be the big news subsequently coming out of the meeting.

Closed and formal

The PDF has come a long way from back then, both in form and substance. In the early 90s, it was an exclusive affair among donor agencies and high government officials.

It was alternately held in Paris, to make it easy for finance and development ministers from the European donor-countries to attend, and Tokyo, in recognition of the fact that Japan had contributed the bulk of our foreign assistance then, as it continues to do today.

It was only in the latter 90s that the meeting was opened to token participation (translation: two representatives) from civil society. Even then, I remember how having Ging Deles and Boy Morales in the meeting was enough to throw some economic managers and donor representatives off balance at the time.

The CG meetings used to be rather staid and formal, which was reflected in the agenda, the tenor of the discussions, and the participants' attire. Well, not anymore.

Last year's Davao PDF and last week's Tagaytay meeting contrasted with the stiff old CG meetings of years past. The dress code now bans ties and barongs, and Ambassador Ryu Yamazaki of Japan reportedly set the tone of informality last year by starting what appears to be shaping up as a PDF tradition: spicing the otherwise serious discussions with jokes poking fun at economists.

Bikini economists

The air of informality has actually helped promote open and candid discussion, in contrast to past CG meetings that featured formal and copious presentations on statistics covering the range from social and economic indicators to project implementation yardsticks.

Ambassador Yamazaki's precedent-setting joke in Davao, repeated by Secretary Jess Dureza for the Tagaytay meeting last week, was therefore quite apt.

He pointed out then that the statistics cited by economists were much like a woman's bikini: what it exposes are indicative, but what it conceals are vital. A dig, I suppose, at how official statistics—especially the economic statistics that we get bombarded with constantly—don't usually give us the complete picture.

Indeed, the statistics our good friend Congressman Joey Salceda shows in his now famous 200-frame Powerpoint would have one believe that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is God's gift to this nation—and yet others can just as convincingly present statistics to show that she has thoroughly mismanaged the economy, her Ph D in Economics from UP notwithstanding.

Oldest profession

In the tradition that he himself set, Ambassador Yamazaki opened his many wise contributions to last week's PDF with a joke that should convince us all that economics must be the oldest profession in the world.

In a bragging session among a doctor, an engineer and an economist, the doctor claims he has the oldest profession thus: "When God made Eve out of Adam's rib on the sixth day of the Creation, surely He must have had assistance from a doctor!" The engineer, not to be outdone, points out that even before Adam and Eve, God had made the universe and the earth, and everything in it. "Surely," he argues, "He must have had help from an engineer!" The economist, not about to lose the argument, reminds the two: "Ah, but well before God made the universe and the earth, remember that there was nothing but chaos all around. Now who do you think was responsi-

PDF/B14

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Metrobank Fun Savers Club: Teaching kids to save the fun way

Parents often wonder when is the right time to teach children the basics of savings. Studies made on Filipino children across the country indicate that the young emerging market accounts for spending power of more than P20 billion a year. Being constantly exposed to commercialism in all forms of media, kids today are slowly becoming big influences in making a purchase, if not outright decision-makers.

Since buying habits are being developed at an early age, now is the best time for parents to start teaching kids the value of saving.

Perhaps, one way to teach children how to handle money properly is by allowing them such experience guided by adult wisdom. Some parents offer to give their kids a minimal amount of money - in the form of allowances or monetary gifts. While doing so, parents are encouraged to guide their kids in deciding how to spend their cash, as well as motivate them to save.

Here are some creative ways on how to teach kids to save.

1. Give your children a regular allowance and agree on how much they are supposed to set aside for their savings.

2. Buy saving tools - like a piggy bank - in different colors, characters and shapes. You can also let them create their own piggy banks out of empty jars and tins.

3. Offer rewards for a reasonable target amount saved within a particular period of time like after one semester or one school year.

4. Create a colorful chart to record their savings. Post the chart on the refrigerator or any area where your kids usually hang out so they can regularly see how much their money is increasing.

5. If your child is saving for a particular item, post a photo of that item on the piggy bank, cupboard or bedroom door as a constant reminder of the reward they will receive once they have saved enough money to make the purchase.

Better yet, let your kids experience the fun of banking by introducing them to kiddie accounts that offer exciting perks and activities the young ones will surely appreciate.

Fun Savers Club Metrobank

Metrobank, the country's leading bank, makes saving even more exciting with the launch of the Fun Savers Club (FSC) Gift Check. A perfect gift alternative for special occasions, it comes in a candy-color design with a gift check holder that kids will love.

The FSC gift check is special because it can be used to open a new Fun Savers Club account conveniently. It can also be used to add funds to an existing Fun Savers account.

"The FSC gift check is an affordable and better alternative to usual presents such as toys and clothes," said Metrobank Corporate Planning Division head Bernardito M. Lapuz. "What's more, it teaches children the value of saving by making the habit more fun and exciting."

The FSC gift check is ideal for children below 18 years of age so they can easily open a Fun Savers Club account. Upon opening, they will receive a welcome kit and be entitled to discounts at selected establishments, among other perks.

The account requires only a minimum of P500 initial deposit and average daily balance of P4,000 to earn interest.

FSC gift checks can be purchased at all Metrobank branches with a minimum face value of P500.00. Metrobank depositors can have the purchase amount of the GCs debited from their account while non-Metrobank account holders need to present a valid ID and proof of residency (residence certificate or current billing statement) to make a purchase.

For more information, visit your nearest Metrobank branch or log on to www.metrobank.com.ph.

For more information, visit your nearest Metrobank branch or log on to www.metrobank.com.ph.

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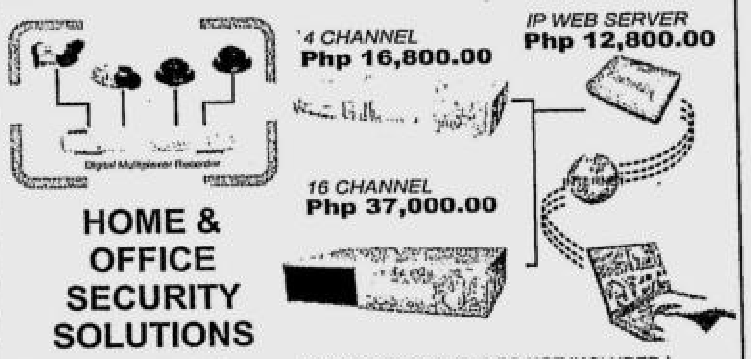

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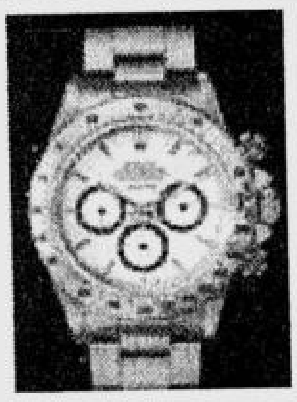

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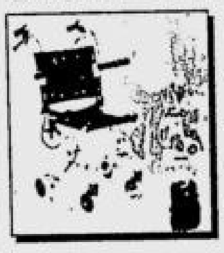

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COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

Eva Air 'poaches' B-market

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES HAD OCCASIONally grumbled about Eva Airways undercutting and "poaching" the economy-class trans-Pacific market of PAL.

The Taiwanese carrier has apparently stopped doing that, at least for this season.

Instead, Eva Air is luring Philippine-based business travellers with lower fares to San Francisco and Los Angeles, the two popular gateway cities in the West Coast.

Eva Air is offering a $1,550 business class, Web-only roundtrip fare from Manila to either of the two cities, as against PAL's $3,776 buy-one, take-one (effectively $1,888 per passenger) business class passage.

Eva Air's offer is valid only up to

COCKTALES/B4

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April 25 – 27, 2006
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You can give frontliners all the training, but without a real culture of customer service in your organization, your programs will not be as effective. Learn how to **evaluate your business** in terms of customer service, **align your people** with your service strategy, and **set standards** of service. Know **your role as a leader** in all this to **unleash the energy** in your people. With Managing Customer Service, you will:

- Create a unique brand of service that will attract and keep customers
- Synchronize the entire team, department, or organization with your customers' priorities
- Set a strategy that will bring the business on the road to superb service
- Identify and assess organizational gaps in your policies, procedures and workflow that hamper excellent service
- Align systems and people to implement the service strategy
- Build a culture of energy and passion that will constantly send the right message to customers
- Cascade a service culture throughout the team, department or organization using Five Crucial Leadership Fundamentals

Excellent Customer Service depends on everyone in your organization.

This program is for ***customer service supervisors, sales coordinators, customer care managers, customer solutions managers, sales supervisors, sales coordinators, sales managers, and vice presidents for sales and customer service,*** *who want to promote a culture of customer service in their organizations.*

Transform negative attitudes into positive performance!

MANAGING WORK ATTITUDES
April 25 - 27, 2006
Mandarin Oriental Hotel

Excellent skills and work knowledge among your people are useless without a positive work attitude. Deal with negativity by learning to **spot attitude problems**, gaining a more **accurate understanding of employee attitudes**, and **becoming a positive force** in the workplace. **Diagnose your organization** and **inspire your employee force** in order to **transform negativity** into positive performance. With Managing Work Attitudes, you will:

- Lead people more effectively using proven attitude management strategies and techniques
- Detect the signs of negative attitudes and take corrective action
- Mold the positive attitudes needed for employee excellence
- Shape, focus and direct employee attitudes to align with company goals
- Implement concrete and practical action plans that will develop positive attitudes, behaviors and habits within the organization
- Create a positive and proactive working environment
- Create the "Attitude Advantage" in the organization by tying together company direction, shared beliefs, structures and systems

A positive work attitude could spell the difference between mediocrity and success.

This program is for ***human resource managers, training managers, sales managers, service managers, marketing managers, personnel managers, operations managers, accounting managers, production managers, business development managers, vice-presidents and presidents*** *who wish to promote a more positive work attitude among their people.*

Troubleshoot with confidence.

PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING
April 25 – 27, 2006
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Leadership is about taking control of situations that arise. Learn about the **nature of problem-solving** and **patterns of thinking. Assess your options, make rational choices,** and **address potential threats.** With Problem Solving and Decision Making, you will:

- Face problems and make decisions with renewed confidence
- Reinforce your authority and credibility with proven problem solving and decision making techniques
- Analyze situations more comprehensively to arrive at the best solution
- Anticipate potential problems, assess risks and weigh alternatives to come up with the best decisions and solutions
- Tackle problems and make decisions more systematically and logically
- Harness support mechanisms that will give rise to better solutions and decisions
- Communicate decisions to team members to reinforce your power, authority and credibility
- Consistently implement and follow-through on decisions
- Overcome obstacles and resistance to "unpopular" decisions

Leaders don't wait for things to happen. They make things happen.

This program is for ***supervisors, line leaders, section heads, logistics managers, operations managers, sales managers, and all other members of the management team*** *who wish to improve their problem-solving and decision-making skills.*

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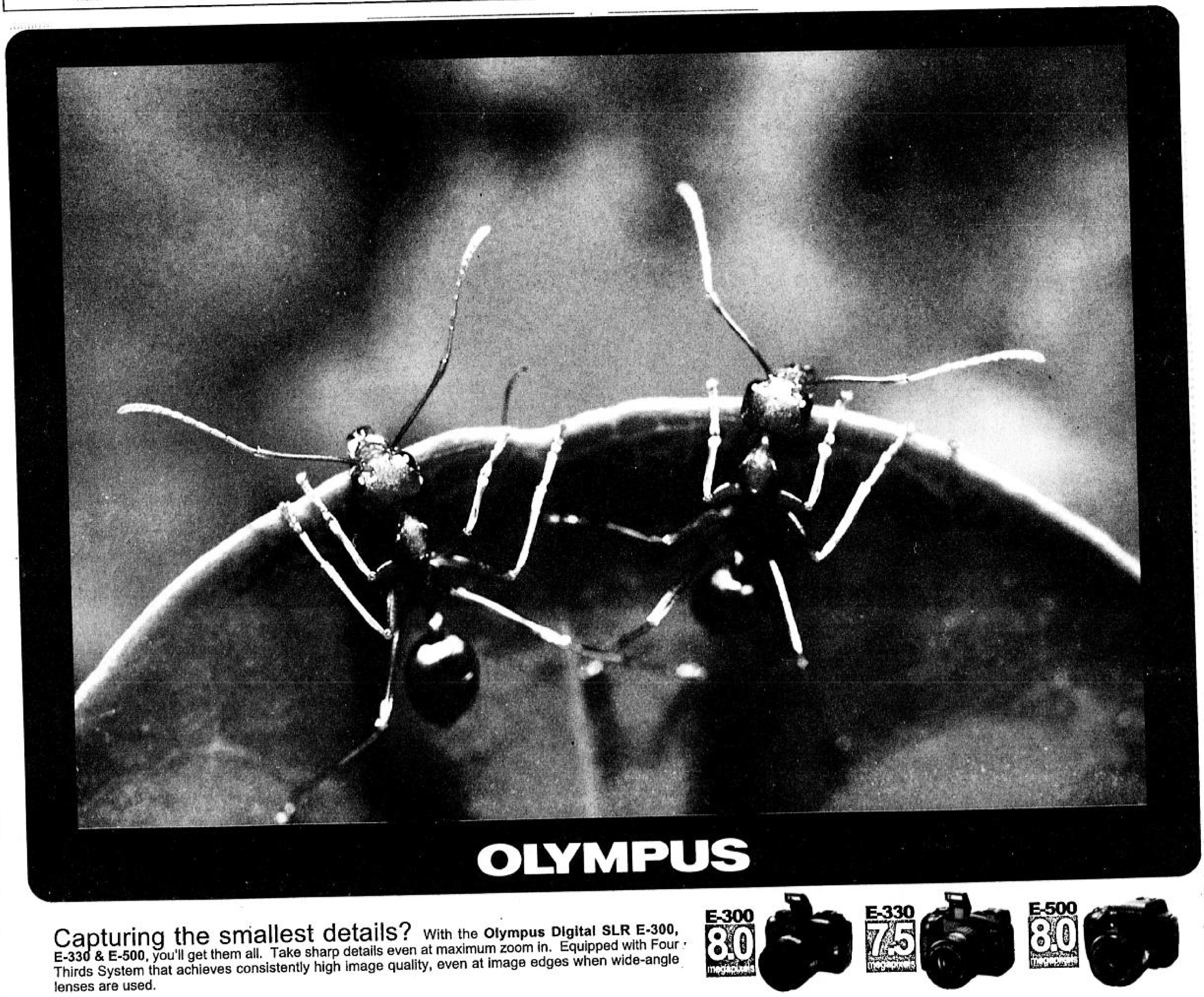

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National Transmission Corporation
South Luzon Operations and Maintenance

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Concreting of Laydown Area at Naga Substation

Brief Description:

An area of approximately 768 sq.m. shall be utilized as laydown area located near the EHV Warehouse which shall be concreted and enclosed with cyclone wire fence.

[TRANS-06-CLAN-EG-03]

The ***NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM***, through the *Internal Cash Generation (ICG)* intends to apply the sum of ***Eight Hundred Eight Thousand Three Hundred Eighty One Pesos and 38/100 (Php808, 381.38)*** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *the* ***Concreting of Laydown Area at Naga Substation***. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The ***NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM*** now invites potential Bidders to submit Letter of Intent (LOI) and apply for eligibility for the ***Concreting of Laydown Area at Naga Substation***. Bidders should possess a valid ***PCAB license*** with ***License Particular of at least: "Category D & C, General Building"*** and ***Registration Particular of at least: "Small B, Building and Industrial Plant"***, respectively, have completed a similar contract involving supply of all labor, materials, supervision necessary for the ***construction of structures made of concrete***. The value of which should be at least 50% of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the eligibility documents. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for submission of eligibility documents shall be on the same date of the opening of Eligibility documents: ***April 18, 2006, 9:00 A.M.*** at the address mentioned in the next succeeding paragraphs. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Document. Completion of the works is required by ***forty (40) calendar days.***

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR-A of R.A 9184, only bids from Bidders who passed the eligibility check will be opened. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested Bidders shall secure the Eligibility documents from the BAC Secretariat at the address stated below, starting ***March 27 to April 11, 2006 from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.*** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ***Php1,000.00***. They shall submit their accomplished Eligibility documents on or before ***April 18, 2006, 9:00 A.M.*** at the stated address. Eligibility Screening shall be held on ***April 18, 2006, 9:30 A.M.*** at the OAVP Conference Room B of the stated address.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from ***NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM*** *Regional Contracts Management Office (RCMO)* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from ***8:00 A.M.*** to ***5:00 P.M.*** on ***April 25, 2006.***

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee ***Php1,000.00***. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative starting ***April 25, 2006, 8:00 A.M.- 5:00 P. M.***

Deadline for submission of bids is on ***May 4, 2006, 9:00 A. M*** at the address below. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the prescribed form indicated under Section 27.2 of R. A. 9184. Bid opening shall be on the same date, ***May 4, 2006, 9:30 A.M.*** at the ***OAVP Conference Room B, Transco-SLOM.*** Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

The ***NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM*** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation – South Luzon Operations & Maintenance
Regional Contracts Management Office (RCMO)
San Vicente Biñan, Laguna 4024
Mr. Ruben G. Castuera – BAC Chairman
(02) 981-4576 to78 local 4086; 4094; 4053
rgcastuera@transco.ph
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www.transco.ph.

(Sgd). RUBEN G. CASTUERA
BAC Chairman

(PDI–March 26 & April 3, 2006)

TransCo

Republic of the Philippines
National Transmission Corporation
South Luzon Operations and Maintenance

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Construction of Lineman's /Operator's Villa at Batangas Substation
[TRANS-06-CLVBS-EG-04]

The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM, through the Internal Cash Generation (ICG) intends to apply the sum of Three Million Four Hundred Eighty Seven Thousand Four Hundred Forty Five & 82/100 (Php3,487,445.82) being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for Construction of Lineman's/Operator's Villa at Batangas Substation. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM now invites potential Bidders to submit Letter of Intent (LOI) and apply for eligibility for the construction of lineman's/operator's villa at batangas substation. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license with License Particular of at least: "Category D & C, General Building" and Registration Particular of at least: "Small B-Building & Industrial Plant", must have at least completed a single contract similar to the contract to be bid involving experience in construction of all types of building, i.e. housing, schools, hospitals, market, multi-storey buildings, airport terminals & other related structures. The value of which should be at least 50% of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the eligibility documents. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for submission of eligibility documents shall be on the same date of the opening of Eligibility documents: April 11, 2006, 9:00 A.M. at the address mentioned in the next succeeding paragraphs. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Document. Completion of the works is required by 125 calendar days.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR Part A of R.A 9184, only bids from Bidders who passed the eligibility check will be opened. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested Bidders shall secure the Eligibility documents from the BAC Secretariat at the address stated below, starting March 27-Apr. 10, 2006 from 8:00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php1,000.00. They shall submit their accomplished Eligibility documents on or before April 11, 2006, 9.00 A.M. at the stated address. Eligibility Screening shall be held on April 11, 2006, 9:00 A. M. at the OAVP Conference Room B of the stated address.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM Regional Contracts Management Office (RCMO) and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. on April 26-28, 2006.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee Php5,000.00. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative starting April 26-28, 2006, 8:00 A.M.- 5:00 P.M.

The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on May 02, 2006, 9:30 A.M. at the OAVP Conference Room Transco, SLOM San Vicente Biñan, Laguna.

Deadline for submission of bids is on May 15, 2006, 9:30 A. M at the address below. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the prescribed form indicated under Section 27.2 of R. A 9184. Bid opening shall be on the same date, May 15, 2006, 9:30 A.M at the OAVP Conference Room B of Transco SLOM. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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Regional Contracts Management Office (RCMO)
San Vicente Biñan, Laguna 4024
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DEALERS AND RESELLERS WELCOME

Cocktales

From page B3

June 30 departure, while PAL's promo is available all-year round. For the more price-sensitive passengers, Eva Air's De Luxe/Elite class, between economy and business class sections, offers a $1,100 fare from Manila for the same destinations.

Eva Air's downside: Excluding the detour and additional flight time to and from Taipei, stopover at the Chiang Kai-shek takes five long hours for the Pacific-bound leg, plus another 3.5 hours layover time for the Manila-return trip.

PAL's downside: Its planes, and quite a number of the seats, have seen better days. Incidentally, economy-class passage on Eva Air for the same route is quoted at $950, as against PAL's $940. In this case, travellers can get better rates from travel agents than the two airlines' Web-quoted fares.

Money-go-round

- THE OFFICE of ex-Rep. Apolinario "Jun" Lozada Jr. wrote to clarify that the former Negros Occidental congressman is not the same "Jun" Lozada who was reported here Friday as a close-in consultant of Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

The latter Lozada (full name: Noel Rodolfo Lozada Jr.) hails from Bicol, and is president of Philippine Forest Corp.

o HONDA is maximizing its marketing budget for the new, sharper-looking Civic by holding tonight's press launch by the Greenbelt 3 fountain, instead of the usual indoor/hotel event.

Heard through the grapevine

SEAIR is enjoying monopoly pricing status in Zamboanga-Jolo route with the stoppage of the fast-ferry service and the collapse of another airline serving the southern corridor. One-way airfare for the half-hour flight now costs P2,133.60 with taxes, as against the P2,795 PAL now charges for 1.5-hour Manila-Zamboanga flight.

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Brady bonds cause stir

By Doris C. Dumlao

A DEBATE LOOMS among fiscal and monetary officials as to whether the national government must issue domestic or offshore bonds to retire up to $774 million in remaining Brady bonds.

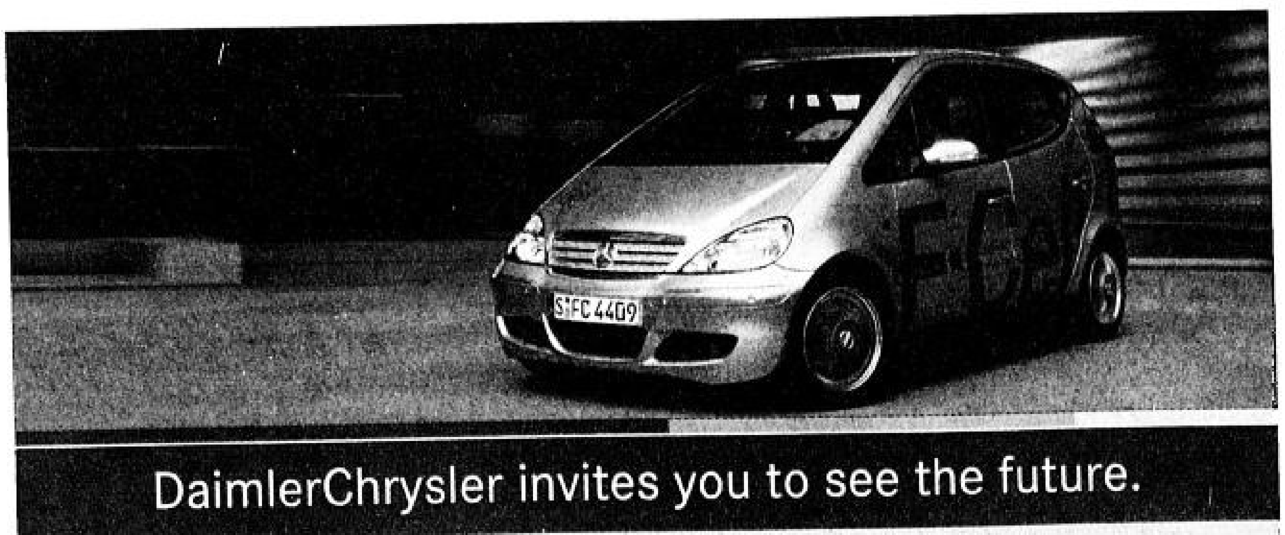
Government sources said the Bureau of Treasury wanted to raise foreign exchange to buy back the Brady bonds by borrowing from the domestic market.

In buying back the Brady bonds—using US dollars purchased from the spot foreign exchange market—the government would help stabilize the peso-dollar exchange rate, sources said.

But some members of the Monetary Board, the policy-making body of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, did not want to retire the Brady bonds at the expense of the country's foreign exchange reserves.

They preferred that the national government issue offshore bonds rather than local bonds to retire the Brady bonds, which date back to the country's painful debt crisis years.

BRADY/B13



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- Mr. Joachim Weil, Manager for Technical & Warranty, DaimlerChryler Southeast Asia on "Alternative Drive Systems: Innovative approaches to enhance fuel efficiency and reduce emissions"; "Car Safety"; and "New Trends in Driver Support Systems"
- Mr. Peter Froeschle, Senior Manager for Strategic Energy Projects & Fuel Cell Market Development, DaimlerChrysler Germany on "Alternative Fuels: The key to sustainable mobility"
- Mr. Franklin Taye, Manager of Fuel Cell Projects - Singapore, DaimlerChrysler Southeast Asia on "Fuel Cells: Experiences from tests in Singapore"
- Mr. Helfried Scharf, Head of External Affairs & Communications, DaimlerChrysler Southeast Asia on "DaimlerChrysler: A truly global company"
- Mr. Gerd-Udo Hauser, Director for External Affairs & Public Policy, DaimlerChrysler Germany on "The Abaca Project in the Philippines"

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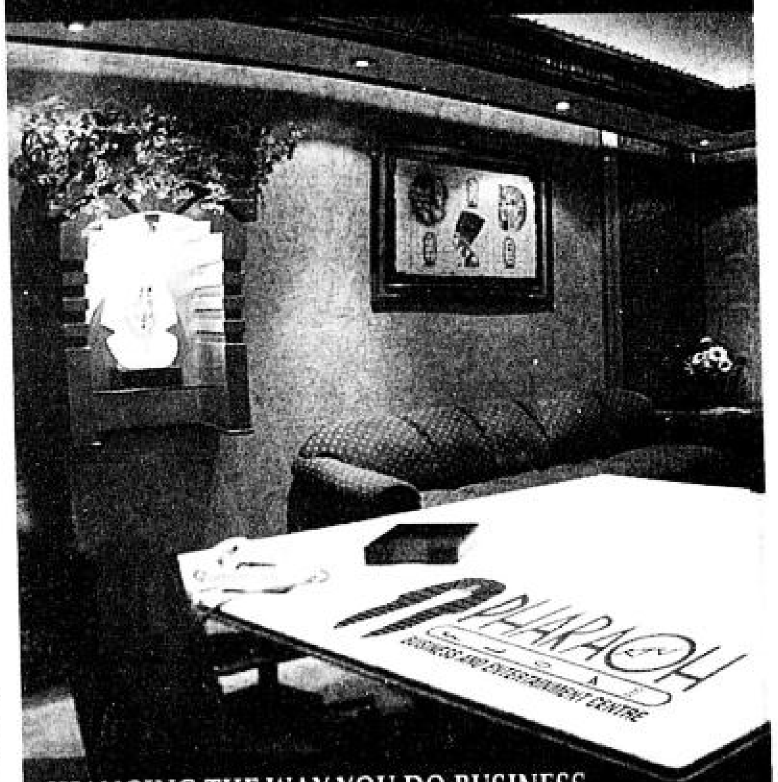

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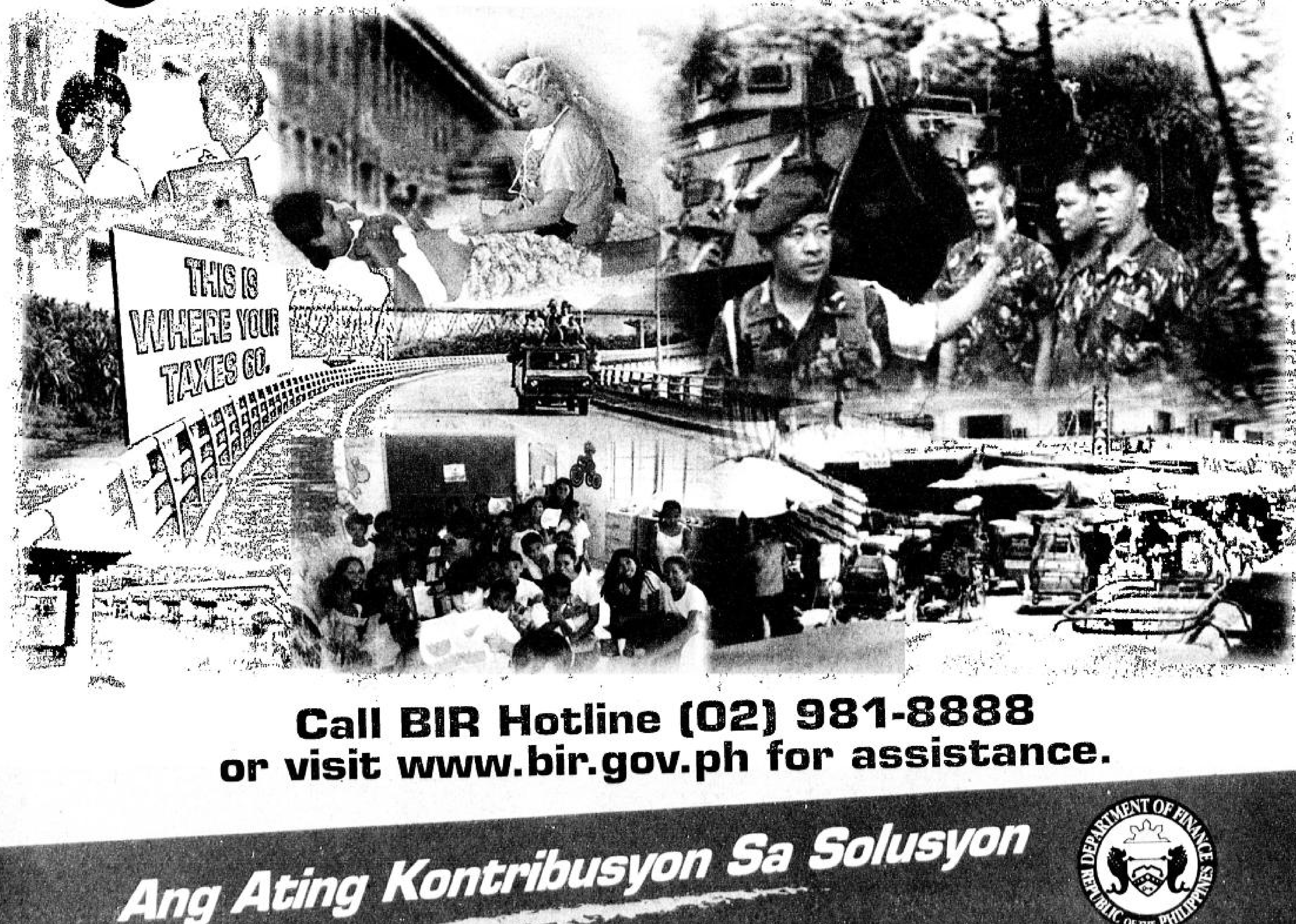
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Ang Ating Kontribusyon Sa Solusyon

BAP unit seeks capital from banks

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANKERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES is in a dilemma on how to bankroll its fledgling fixed income exchange unit, Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. (PDEX), whose financial viability some member-banks are starting to question.

Banking sources said PDEX had asked BAP members to pump in more cash to the exchange, which had used up all P450 million of its paid-up capital to build infrastructure.

According to the sources, some of the banks are no longer keen on funding PDEX.

Those critical of the fixed income exchange believe that PDEX's business model is bound to go bankrupt. Proponents, on the hand, are saying that the banking community must look at the long-term benefits for capital market development.

BAP executive director Leonilo Coronel confirmed that PDEX was asking the banks to shell out more funds for the exchange's operation over the next three years.

"PDEX bought the fixed income trading system for BAP and the foreign exchange platform, and (PDEX) has committed to it," said one proponent. "If (PDEX is) not going to use it, revenues are going to be strained."

The proponent added that the banks would need to support PDEX either through capital infusion or advance.

But other bankers said PDEX's fixed costs were too heavy a burden for banks, whose revenues were not coming in.

"The (PDEX) model creates a monopoly," another banker noted. "(PDEX) wants all trade to go through it, but (bank) treasurers are saying, 'let's do that, but let's continue with the OTC (over-the-counter) transactions.'"

PDEX is 38 percent owned by the BAP, 12.22 percent by the Philippine Stock Exchange, and 10 percent each by technology and infrastructure providers Tata Consulting and Computershare. Other shareholders are San Miguel Corp. (5 percent), Philam Life (5 percent), Investment Houses Association of the Philippines (2.5 percent) and Social Security System (2 percent).

Proponents of the exchange warned that the lack of support from the BAP to sustain PDEX would "burn" other investors invited by the banking community to invest in it.

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Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,100,000/1,250,000*	Pls. Call
Alta Vista B/Corp.*	-	Pls. Call/300,000*
Baguio Country Club	-	500,000
Camp John Hay	-	Pls. Call
Canlubang Golf	500,000	Pls. Call
Canyon Woods	120,000	-
Capitol Hills	60,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,500,000	1,350,000
Celebrity Sports	120,000	100,000
City Sports Club Cebu	-	350,000
Club Filipino	110,000	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	330,000*/380,000**	150,000/Pls. Call*
Eastridge A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	120,000/200,000*	150,000*
Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	300,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	11,500,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,000,000
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Southwoods A/B*	350,000/Pls. Call*	200,000/100,000*
Makati Sports Club	100,000	160,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	350,000	250,000
Metropolitan Club A/B*	180,000	100,000
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	Pls. Call	150,000/300,000*/400,000**
Mt. Malarayat A	230,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	150,000/Pls. Call*/400,000**	150,000
Punta Fuego	400,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	90,000/150,000*/250,000**	130,000*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	160,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	80,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	80,000*
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	Pls. Call	1,100,000/1,550,000*
The Palms Country Club	550,000	350,000
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	310,000
Tagaytay Highlands	680,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	600,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club	140,000	-
Valley Golf	210,000	-
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	6,350,000	6,175,000

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BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	550K	ALTA VISTA B	330K
CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	500K	BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	520K
FOREST HILLS A	100K	CLUB FILIPINO	90K
FOREST HILLS B	180K	EAGLE RIDGE B	300K
EAGLERIDGE A	150K	MANILA GOLF IND	11.3M
EAGLERIDGE C	330K	MANILA GOLF CORP	11.5M
MANILA GOLF CORP	12.0M	MANILA POLO CLUB	2.350M
MANILA POLO CLUB	PLS CALL	MANILA SOUTHWOODS B	670K
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A	330K	MIMOSA GOLF IND	150K
MANILA YACHT CLUB	350K	ORCHARD A	150K
PUNTA FUEGO	400K	ORCHARD B	300K
ROCKWELL CLUB	PLS CALL	RIVIERA GOLF B	130K
ROYALE TAGAYTAY	70K	STA. ELENA B	1.450M
SUBIC GOLF CLUB	120K	THE PALMS	PLS CALL
TAGAYTAY HIGLANDS	640K	VALLE VERDE	90K
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	550K	VALLEY GOLF	180K
TOWER CLUB C	300K	WACK WACK	6.0M(ALL IN)
VALLEY GOLF CLUB	230K	OTHER GOLF CLUBS	PLS CALL
WACK WACK	6.150M		

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Ayala hikes par value of new shares

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AYALA CORP. IS AMENDING THE PAR VALUE of its new preferred shares under a reclassification scheme to raise P5.8 billion in fresh capital.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Ayala managing director Renato Marzan said that the firm would hike the par value of its new preferred B shares to P100 apiece from the proposed P1 a share.

Also, it will reduce the number of preferred B shares to 58 million shares from the proposed 5.8 billion shares.

The directors of one of the country's biggest conglomerates approved the amendments to the new preferred "B" shares last Friday.

The amended resolution will be submitted for ratification by stockholders during the company's annual stockholders meeting on April 7.

Earlier, sources had said that the preferred shares would be issued in the second quarter, or once the board has secured shareholders' approval.

The new funds may be used to pay down debt or fund working capital, sources said.

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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,150,000	1,050,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,200,000	1,050,000
Anvaya Cove Beach and Nature Club	Please Call	-
Baguio Country Club	Please Call	500,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	-
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	70,000	-
Camp John Hay	220,000	170,000
Canlubang	500,000	400,000
Capitol Hills	60,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,500,000	1,350,000
Celebrity Sports Club	100,000	90,000
Club Filipino	100,000	-
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	100,000	-
Forest Hills "B"	200,000	150,000
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	160,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	11,600,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	11,000,000
Manila Polo	2,500,000	2,200,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	340,000	-
Manila Southwoods "B"	Please Call	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	350,000	200,000
Mimosa (Individual)	220,000	160,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	450,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	250,000	200,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	180,000	140,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	370,000	325,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	380,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	125,000
Spa & Lodge	450,000	400,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,200,000	1,100,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,700,000	1,500,000
Subic Bay Golf	200,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands	700,000	600,000
Tagaytay Midlands	670,000	600,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	90,000	-
Valle Verde (Corporate)	200,000	160,000
Valley Golf	230,000	180,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club*	6,350,000	6,175,000

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RP needs . . .

From page B1

of Thailand, with Filipino workers even edging out the Thais in terms of English proficiency. However, the study said the Philippines must deal with the following to maintain and improve this competitiveness:

- The Philippines risks being perceived to be an unfavorable destination of investment if the minimum wages are further increased.
- Radical unionism is a major disadvantage for the Philippines against Thailand as a major cause of disruption of production.
- Unpredictable non-working holidays should discontinue in the Philippines as they abruptly disrupt production and shipping plans, including labor costs.
- The Philippines needs to raise the level of education in order to upgrade workers' productivity.

The study also lamented that the Philippines had a different set of government bodies offering various investment incentives as against Thailand whose Board of Investment was virtually a "one-stop shop."

It added that the Philippines had constitutional constraints prohibiting foreign ownership of land and limit foreign equity participation.

Corporate taxation in the Philippines was also noted to be the highest among major Asean countries, putting the country "at risk of being considered an investor-unfriendly" destination.

Thailand was also cited to be ahead in terms of value-added tax refund, which is approved and settled in a year, at the longest.

The study added that it was a general perception among Japanese companies that Thailand was ahead in terms of transparency and fairness in tax administration.

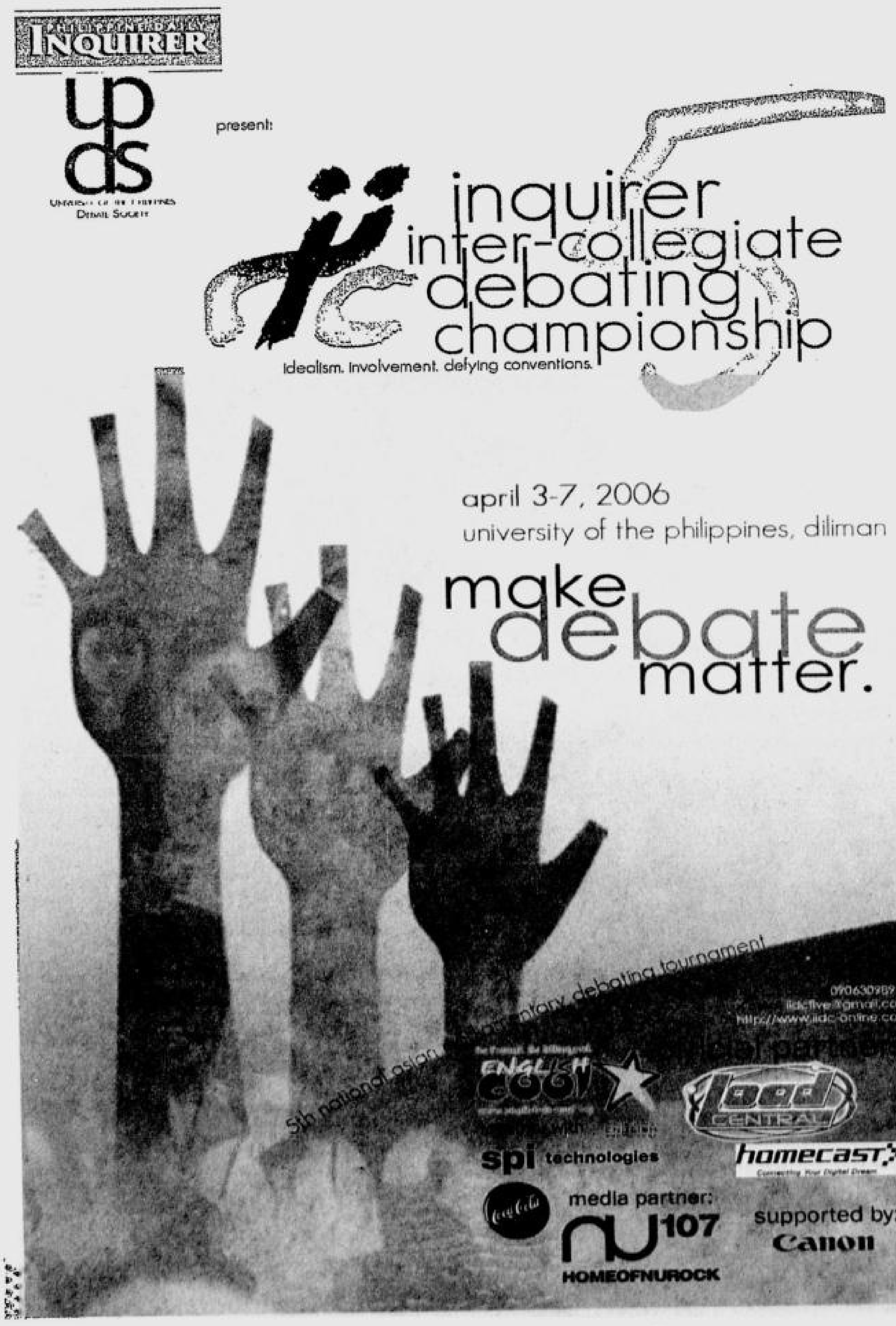
In terms of infrastructure, Thailand was seen much ahead in almost all areas, including roads, ports, airports and electric power.

"The Philippine government needs to concentrate its infrastructure funding on the development of the Grand Growth Corridor which connects Subic Bay and Batangas area through Manila," the study said.

The study specifically noted that the government must speed up the following projects: highway link between Manila and Batangas port, improvement of the Alabang viaduct, construction of the Subic Bay-Clark-Tarlac Highway Corridor, Subay Bay construction and phase 2 of the Batangas port development project.

"Many of the government projects on infrastructure development are being delayed, mostly due to shortage of budget and insufficient coordination among government agencies involved," the study said.

The study added that Naia 3 had become a symbolic failure of private investment in the Philippines.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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 31, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		FINANCIAL			
		BANKS			
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	4,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	35	35	34	34	377,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	62	62.5	62	62.5	2,189,000
China Banking Corp.	685	685	685	685	1,300
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	600
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.46	0.47	14,870,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	75.5	76	73	75	725,700
International Exch. Bank	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	51,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38.5	39	38	39	1,108,500
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	55	55	55	55	700
Philippine National Bank	34	34	34	34	12,300
Phil. Savings Bank	40	40	40	40	10,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	12,000
Security Bank Corp.	44.5	44.5	42.5	43.5	36,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	36.5	36.5	36.5	36.5	16,900
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS			
First Metro Invest. Corp.	27	28	27	27.5	55,200
Manulife Financial Corp.	3200	3210	3200	3210	400
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1.02	1	1.02	130,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	166	170	166	170	6,760
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2150	2185	2150	2185	300
Ivantage Corp.	0.95	0.97	0.94	0.95	3,760,000
		INDUSTRIAL			
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER			
First Gen Corp.	44.5	45	44.5	45	144,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45.5	46.5	45.5	46.5	1,123,300
Manila Electric Co. A	13	13.25	12.75	13.25	102,300
Manila Electric Co. B	20	20.75	19.75	20.5	659,300
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.6	5,218,000
Petron Corp.	4.4	4.45	4.35	4.4	6,355,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	530,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO			
CADP Group Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	2,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36	36	35.5	36	222,700
Pancake House Inc.	4	4.1	4	4.1	863,000
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.74	0.7	0.74	500,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.46	2.55	2.46	2.55	1,402,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	120,000
San Miguel Corp. A	60	60.5	58.5	60.5	370,600
San Miguel Corp. B	81	81	79	81	253,400
Universal Robina Corp.	18	18	17.75	17.75	2,174,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.29	0.26	0.29	2,190,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES			
Southeast Asian Cement	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.31	250,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.42	1.46	2,065,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.1	4.1	4	4	5,045,000
		CHEMICALS			
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.26	1.3	1.26	1.3	30,000
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.7	2.75	2.7	2.75	2,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
Global Equities Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	200,000
Macondray Plastics Inc.	3	3	3	3	40,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	280,000
		HOLDING FIRMS			
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.007	155,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	3,000,000
Ayala Corp.	355	357.5	352.5	355	206,490
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.1	1,722,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	1,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	5,300,000
APC Group Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	3,100,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	16,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	100,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	8.9	9.2	8.9	9.2	69,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.99	1	0.99	1	2,920,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.4	3.55	3.4	3.45	10,098,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.9	2.9	855,000
JG Summit Holdings Inc.	5.8	5.9	5.7	5.9	441,000
Medco Holdings	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	20,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	320,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	900,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.245	0.25	0.245	0.245	1,740,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	100,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.145	0.14	0.14	8,890,000
SM Investments Corp.	228	229	225	229	1,138,300
South China Resources Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	210,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.0575	0.0575	0.055	0.055	2,100,000
		PROPERTY			
Ayala Land Inc.	10.75	11.25	10.75	11.25	14,663,700
Belle Corp.	1.12	1.14	1.1	1.14	14,460,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	2,300,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.84	1.92	1.84	1.92	2,526,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.78	1.8	35,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	1,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	1,200,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	180,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.64	0.65	0.64	0.64	17,840,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.28	1.28	7,908,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	3.1	3.5	3	3.5	1,710,000
Interport Res.	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	3,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	1,100,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.55	0.56	0.55	0.56	1,470,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	2,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.5	1.52	1.48	1.52	8,547,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.28	0.26	0.27	73,430,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.29	580,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	8	8	7.9	7.9	437,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.28	0.3	0.28	0.28	3,320,000
SM Development Corp.	1.54	-1.54	1.54	1.54	3,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	8	7.8	7.9	7,416,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.125	0.13	7,310,000
		SERVICE			
		MEDIA			
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	11.5	12.25	11.5	12.25	245,300
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	1,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.98	0.99	0.96	0.99	1,760,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	880	885	880	880	74,250
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.95	3	2.8	2.85	8,660,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1910	1930	1910	1925	242,040
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	150,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.05	800,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	10,000
Philweb Corp.	0.024	0.025	0.024	0.025	208,500,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.55	989,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	725,500
		HOTEL & LEISURE			
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	922,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.78	1.78	800,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	5,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.3	0.28	0.3	1,150,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.44	1,560,000
		EDUCATION			
Centro Escolar University	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1	5,000
Far Eastern University	645	645	645	645	2,850
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES			
Macroasia Corp.	2.08	2.1	2	2	1,021,000
Paxys Inc.	8.8	9.1	8.8	9	2,540,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	4,000
		MINING & OIL			
		MINING			
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.22	1.28	1.22	1.26	1,564,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.38	1.5	1.3	1.36	193,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	130,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	748,000
Benguet Corp. A	7.9	7.9	7.6	7.6	33,000
Benguet Corp. B	25	25	25	25	700
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.23	0.215	0.23	46,330,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.26	0.28	0.26	0.27	26,340,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.021	0.019	0.02	608,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.029	0.026	0.028	513,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	68,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	2.65	2.7	2.65	2.7	11,960,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2.7	2.75	2.65	2.7	13,056,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	25.5	26	25.5	26	153,500
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.31	1,050,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	600,000
		OIL			
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	1,570,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.008	159,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	15,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	40,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.75	3.75	30,000
		PREFERRED			
PLDT (10% Pref) Series J	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
		WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.			
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	11.5	12	11.5	11.75	452,400

CURRENCIES

April 2, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.821558	1.000000	51.2840
Japan	Yen	0.007002	0.008523	0.4371
United Kingdom	Pound	1.435836	1.747700	89.6290
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.105877	0.128873	6.6091
Switzerland	Franc	0.633820	0.771486	39.5649
Canada	Dollar	0.709340	0.863409	44.2791
Singapore	Dollar	0.507604	0.617856	31.6861
Australia	Dollar	0.586366	0.713725	36.6027
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.180007	2.653505	136.0824
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.219058	0.266638	13.6743
Brunei	Dollar	0.506041	0.615953	31.5885
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000110	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021156	0.025750	1.3206
UAE	Dirham	0.223705	0.272294	13.9643
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.217200	62.4229
Argentina	Peso	0.266956	0.324939	16.6642
Brazil	Real	0.374712	0.456100	23.3906
Denmark	Kroner	0.134020	0.163129	8.3659
India	Rupee	0.018487	0.022502	1.1540
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.222645	0.271003	13.8981
Mexico	New Peso	0.075179	0.091508	4.6929
New Zealand	Dollar	0.500645	0.609385	31.2517
South Africa	Rand	0.133154	0.162075	8.3119
Korea	Won	0.000842	0.001025	0.0526
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025245	0.030728	1.5759

GMA 7 hits 2005 . . .

From page B1

more than P543 million in principal and interest.

In terms of its regional expansion, the company said it has upgraded its transmitter and other technical facilities in Cebu and Davao and has installed a transmitter in Bacolod.

GMA earlier said it would set aside about P900 million for capital expenses this year.

It said GMA Pinoy TV, which was launched in the United States, Japan, Guam and Malaysia last year and the Middle East and Cerritos, California, this year, continued to increase its subscriber base, exceeding 80,000 as of March this year.

Malaysian firm joins Masinloc winning bidder

By Abigail L. Ho

MALAYSIAN CONGLOMERATE Ranhill Bhd has joined the YNN Pacific Consortium Inc., the winning bidder for the 600-megawatt Masinloc coal-fired power plant.

Ranhill has committed to help the group meet the new June 30 deadline for the remittance of the $227-million payment for the plant.

In a briefing Saturday, Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) president Nieves Osorio said YNN had already firmed up its partnership with Ranhill and that the Malaysian firm had also showed its commitment to the deal.

PSALM officials recently met with YNN representatives, Ranhill president and chief executive Tan Sri Hamdan Mohamad, and Ranhill Power Bhd chair Tan Sri Majid Khan, where the Malaysian firm revealed its vision of beefing up its power business.

It was also during that meeting, Osorio said, that PSALM gave the YNN-Ranhill consortium another three months to come up with the $227-million payment for the plant, which represented 40 percent of the consortium's winning bid of $561.7 million.

The state firm also hiked the performance bond for the plant to $14 million from the original $11 million.

This amount would be forfeited in favor of the government if YNN-Ranhill fails to remit the payment on time.

"We believe that the additional $3-million performance bond is enough indication of YNN-Ranhill's seriousness to push through with the deal. It is also sufficient protection for the government's interest in the next three months," Osorio said.

"We are confident that they can deliver. We've checked the seriousness of (Ranhill)," she added.

She related that Ranhill had appointed ABN-Amro as the sole rating advisor, lead manager and book runner for the deal.

The investment firm would help the group raise the $227-million payment.

The Asian Development Bank had also signified its interest to provide project refinancing and possibly equity, she said.

A letter-agreement between Ranhill and ADB stated that the multilateral lender would soon begin review of and due diligence on the project.

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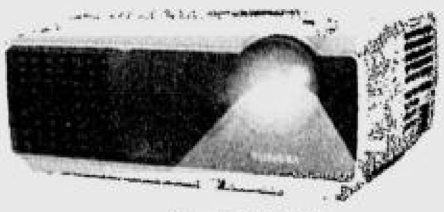

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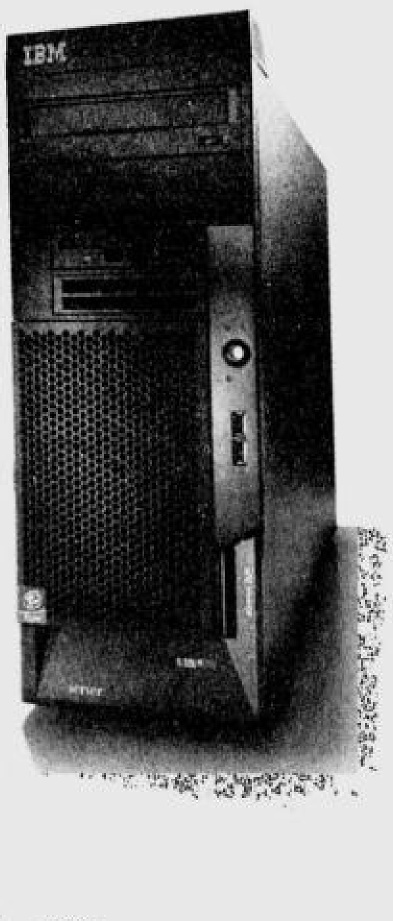

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OBITUARIES

Into Your hands, I commit my spirit, redeem me O Lord,
The God of Salvation. PSALMS 31:5

Atty. Lumen R. Policarpio

of Navotas, Metro Manila

October 24, 1916 – March 30, 2006

Former Assistant Executive Secretary to Pres. Ramon Magsaysay
Former President of Federacion Internationale De Abogadas (FIDA)
Former President IBP, Manila Chapter
Former Chairman of UNESCO (Philippines)
Former Member, Board of Liquidators, Office of the President
Former President, Woman Lawyers Association of the Philippines (WLAP)
Distinguished Elderly, Cathedral of King, Sheridan St., Mandaluyong City.

Parents: Simeon (†) & Modesta (†); Brothers and Sisters: Ricardo, Felizardo (†), Abelardo (†), Baby (†), Conde, Pepe (†) and Ruben; Adopted Children Former PLLO Sec. Jimmie & Sheila Policarpio, Renee & Beth Policarpio, Gina Policarpio, Sisters and Brother-in-Law, Nephews & Nieces, and Grandchildren, Relatives and Friends join in prayer for her eternal repose in heaven.

Her remains lie at the Magallanes Church Memorial Chapel, Magallanes Village, South Super Hi-way (SLEX), Makati City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, April 5, 2006 after 9:00 A.M. Mass at the Family Mausoleum at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

28th Death Anniversary

of the LATE

ESPERANZA LIMJAP VDA. DE OSMEÑA

(1896-1978)

Masses will be offered at the following Churches on 04 April 2006:

St. John Bosco Parish Church Pasay Road, Makati City	6:30 a.m.
Santuario de San Antonio Parish Forbes Park, Makati City	7:30 a.m.
St. Andrew the Apostle Parish Church Bel-Air Village, Makati City	6:30 p.m.
Malate Catholic Church, Our Lady of Remedies Parish 2000 M. J. Del Pilar, Malate, Manila	6:00 a.m.
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish Barasoain, Malolos City	6:00 a.m.
Basilica Minore of the Immaculate Concepcion Parish, Malolos City	6:00 a.m.
Shrine of Our Lady of Manaoag Parish Manaoag, Pangasinan	6:00 a.m.
Redemptorist Church Cebu City	6:00 a.m.
Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral Parish P. Burgos Street, Cebu City	6:30 a.m.
Basilica del Sto. Niño Augustinian Fathers, Osmeña Blvd., Cebu City	7:00 a.m.
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish N. Escario Street, Capitol Site, Cebu City	5:30 p.m.
St. Therese of the Child Jesus Parish Lahug, Cebu City	6:00 p.m.
San Roque Parish Church Subangdako, Mandaue City	6:00 p.m.
Sto. Rosario Parish P. del Rosario St., Cebu City	7:00 p.m.

Readers are requested to pray
for the eternal repose of her soul.

"Come
to Me,
all you
who are
weary
and
burdened,
and I
will give
you
rest."
Matthew 11:28

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors, registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and classified, at least, as Category C and D, IAC Small, Sub-Category B, Specialty in Electrical Works or General Building – Building & Industrial Plant and have completed within the last ten (10) years at least one (1) supply, delivery, installation, testing and commissioning of electrical distribution system contract amounting to at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

SUPPLY, DELIVERY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF THE BOHOL EXPANDED RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT STAGE I, SCHEDULE 1 (5 SITIOS)
EDC 06-039

The Approved Budget is **PhP 1,089,429.51** chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 110 calendar days.

Application forms for eligibility and the bidding documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o F.T. Tolibas local 5179) starting **April 3, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: One Thousand (PhP 1,000.00).**

Site inspection is on **April 25-26, 2006.** For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **April 28, 2006 2:00 p.m.** at the BAC Conference Room, First Floor, Building V, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Application for eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, First Floor, Building V, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila **not later than 2:00 p.m. (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time)** of **May 9, 2006** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–April 3 & 9, 2006)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills
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CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

IN THE MATTER OF

ACTIVE REALTY AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION : REGISTRATION OF SECURITIES
X-----------------------------------X

NOTICE AND ORDER

Notice is hereby given that on March 15, 2006, a registration statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for and on behalf of **ACTIVE REALTY AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION** for the registration of 324 Timeshare Membership Certificates at a price ranging from P323,000.00 to P1,827,600.00 each.

According to the papers/documents presented, the following persons are the directors/officers of the corporation:

Name	Position
ANTONIO A. TURALBA, Sr.	Chairman
MA. CRISTINA V. TURALBA	Vice-Chairman/Director
ANTONIO V. TURALBA, Jr.	President
ANTONELLA T. ABDON	Director/Treasurer
ANJEANETTE T. FUENTEBELLA	Director
RENE J. KATIGBAK	Corporate Secretary

Said registration statement and other papers/documents attached thereto are open to inspection by interested parties during business, hours and copies thereof, photostatic or otherwise, shall be furnished to every party at such reasonable fees as the Commission may prescribe.

JUSTINA F. CALLANGAN
Director

(PDI–March 27 & April 3, 2006)

APOLLO MINERAL RESOURCES INC.

c/o Unit G, 11th Floor, Strata 100 Building,
F. Ortigas Jr. Avenue (formerly Emerald Avenue),
Ortigas Center, Pasig City
c/o Tel. No. 910-5013; 636-0829; 637-2797

NOTICE OF SPECIAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A SPECIAL MEETING OF ALL STOCKHOLDERS OF APOLLO MINERAL RESOURCES, INC., will be held on 18 April 2006 in the afternoon at Unit G, 11th Floor, Strata 100 Building, F. Ortigas Jr. Avenue (formerly Emerald Avenue), Ortigas Center, Pasig City, to discuss the winding up of the business affairs of the corporation.

When registering your attendance at the aforementioned special stockholders' meeting, please present any valid form of identification, such as company I.D., passport or driver's license.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting and would like to be represented by a Proxy, a written and signed copy of the Proxy must be received by the undersigned not later than April 7, 2006. In case of a corporation, the Proxy must be signed by duly authorized officer.

Pasig City, March 16, 2006.

(Sgd.) ELENA T. PEREZ
Acting Corporate Secretary

(PDI - March 20, 27 & Apr. 3, 2006)

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1) 6,000 **Meralco "A"** shares serial numbers 29193 & 552777 registered to **Rosita Co**
2) 3,000 **Petron** shares serial numbers 497610, 710643, 1221352, 1438253 registered to **See Sin Tee**

If found, please contact BDO Securities Corp. 848-6300.

If no contest received, new certificate will be issued.

(PDI–April 3, 10 & 17, 2006)

More Classified Ads on pages B4, B11, B12 & B13

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TransCo Acquires Electronic Library

The National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) recently acquired the subscription to the electronic version of the Worldwide Standards Plus (WWSP), a powerful reference material for engineering. It includes standards from such societies as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), International Electro Technical Commission (IEC), the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) and the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASEE/SAFE). The acquisition of WWSP is part of the continuing efforts of TransCo to improve its efficiency in the operation of the high voltage transmission nationwide. The electronic library can be accessed through the local Intranet of TransCo with as many as 12 simultaneous users online. WWSP is a product of Information Handling Systems (IHS), a leading provider of technical standards worldwide through its local counterpart, Techinfo Solutions Inc. and who can be reached through telephone number 888-1018 or via email at info@techinfo.ph.

Sto. Tomas bats for aviation training facilities in Clark

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT SECRETARY Patricia A. Sto. Tomas said sustained training efforts will enable the country to gear up for the emerging global preference for skilled Filipino aviation workers and maintain, at the same time, the mission critical skills required by the country's own air transport industry. In a radio interview, the Labor Chief suggested that the former US bases — the Clark and Subic — be used for this purpose in order to boost both the aviation training system of the country, and bolster the opportunities not only for pilot trainees, but also for aviation instructors. The Labor Chief indicated that in the maritime sector, for example, the Dutch Shipowners Association had earlier chosen Palompon, Leyte to set up a training school for Filipino seafarers, some 300 of whom have been trained and with 60 given shipboard employment.

Sto. Tomas said that the country needs to gear up and strengthen aviation training in view of a projected global demand for some 10,000 additional pilots until 2010, and an international directive requiring only English-speaking aviation personnel that is expected to be enforced by the year 2008. "Our statistics show that about one Filipino pilot leaves for an overseas job each week.

However, if this increases to even 20, it could lead to local pilot shortages," she said. Those who take the option, she said, are attracted by salaries as high as P500,000 a month offered pilots by airlines abroad, which are tax free in line with the exemption afforded overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). Thus, the Labor Chief added that it is imperative to strengthen the country's aviation training set-up in view of the investment it takes to produce critically required pilots and other mission critical skills, increase the country's aviation workers pool, and effectively preserve and replace those who opt for overseas opportunities. "It takes about eight years, including four years of formal education, as well as another four years of experience to be a full-fledged pilot," Sto. Tomas said.

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POST CENTENNIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT - 4:00 P.
FEBRUARY 18, 2006, SKATING RINK, BAGUIO COUNTRY C

CONTINUING COMMITMENT

Shown from left are Baguio Country Club general manager Anthony De Leon, Baguio City vice mayor Peter Rey Bautista, City mayor Braulio Yaranon, councilor Pinky Chan Rondez and Baguio Country Club president lawyer Federico Agcaoili during the club's Culmination Activity of their Centennial celebration last Feb. 18, which took place at the Burnham Park Skating Rink. In the same event, the BCC employees and executives also visited the more than two hundred pine tree seedlings they planted in the latter.

Expansion of ice cream firm banks on OFWs

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

MILKIN CORP., THE EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTOR of the Fiorgelato Italian ice cream brand in the Philippines, is banking on the growth of Filipino overseas markets to support its expansion in Asia this year.

Milkin president Ricardo Cuna said following the MicroNegosyo Fair at the Philippine Army Gym last Friday that Milkin planned to introduce food services in new markets through joint ventures and possible franchises.

Cuna said Milkin planned to open stores in two Asian markets within the year.

"We have been in the market for 15 years. We are practically in Luzon, Vizayas and Mindanao. Now we are going global. We think our product and company are ready enough to go overseas," Cuna said.

Aside from ice cream, Milkin is also involved in the coffee business through Fior Café.

Fiorgelato has 50 outlets in the Philippines, 40 are held by franchisees and 10 are company-owned.

Milkin Corporation was established in 1989 under a Filipino-Italian business venture.

The company started as Designer's Ice Cream Manufacturing Co., created to formulate ice cream products.

The specially-prepared ice cream catered to restaurants, hotels, and food chains under a "private-labeling" arrangement.

Within the same year, Milkin Corp. was granted exclusive rights from Italy to manufacture, sell, and distribute Fiorgelato.

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PREM_ANT 001 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm.
Quezon Ave., Ext.,
BRGY. SAN JOSE, Antipolo
Min. Bid Price: P 8,000,000.00

PREM_ANT 002 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 132 sqm.
Interior Rd. JOSEFINA SUBD.
Mambungan
Min. Bid Price: P 641,450.00

PREM_ANT 007 VACANT LOT
L.A. 300 sqm.
Alaska St., PALOS VERDES EXEC. VILL.,
Phase 1-A dela Paz, Antipolo
Min. Bid Price: P 1,500,000.00

PREM_ANT 012 VACANT LOT
L.A. 171 sqm.
Pound St., LORES SUBD.,Balimbing
Min. Bid Price: P 427,500.00

ANGONO, RIZAL

PREM_ANG 003 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,617 sqm. F.A. 1,734 sqm.
Aurora Ave. cor. Macopa St.,
AURORA SUBD., San Isidro, Angono
Min. Bid Price: P 13,505,380.00

PREM_ANG 004 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 480 sqm. F.A. 116.25 sqm.
Bayabas St., AURORA SUBD.
Brgy. San Isidro, Angono
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

PREM_ANG 005 VACANT LOT
L.A. 304 sqm.
Aurora Ave. cor. Mangga St.,
AURORA SUBD. Brgy. San Isidro,
Angono
Min. Bid Price: P 1,100,000.00

PREM_ANG 006 VACANT LOT
L.A. 240 sqm.
VILLAGE EAST, Brgy. San Isidro
Min. Bid Price: P 400,000.00

CALOOCAN

PREM_CAL 015 RESIDENTIAL BLDG.
L.A. 1,000 sqm. F.A. 74 sqm.
BO. BAGUMBONG
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

PREM_CAL 028 VACANT LOT
L.A. 150 sqm.
Armsterdam St. VISTA VERDE
NORTH, Phase 1-E Brgy. Llano
Min. Bid Price: P 450,000.00

LAS PIÑAS

PREM_LSP 014 RESIDENTIAL BLDG.
L.A. 300 sqm. F.A. 182.5 sqm.
Circle Gail St., SANTOS VILL.,
Pulang Lupa I
Min. Bid Price: P 1,600,000.00

PREM_LSP 036 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 387 sqm. F.A. 567.82 sqm.
Trinidad St. SAN ISIDRO VILL.
Pamplona 1
Min. Bid Price: P 3,860,000.00

MANILA

PREM_MAN 016 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 140 sqm. F.A. 360 sqm.
A. Almeda St. QUERICADA, Tondo
Min. Bid Price: P 1.816.000.00

MAKATI

PREM_MAK 017 COMMERCIAL CONDO
F.A. 49 sqm.
CITYLAND and DELA ROSA
Condominium
Min. Bid Price: P 1,600,000.00

PREM_MAK 018 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 50 sqm. F.A. 50 sqm.
Lots Nos. 4B & 4C, Blak na Bato St.,
Kalayaan Ave. OLYMPIA
Min. Bid Price: P 1,100,000.00

PREM_MAK 019 OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 38.33 sqm.
MAKATI EXEC. CENTER CONDO
Alfonso St. cor. Herrera St.
Min. Bid Price: P 2,200,000.00

MARIKINA

PREM_MRK 009 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 279 sqm. F.A. 335.75 sqm.
Yellow Stone Park St., cor.
Overland Park St., PARKLAND
ESTATE SUBD. Malanday
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

PREM_MRK 010 VACANT LOT
L.A. 283 sqm.
J.P. Rizal St., cor. Butihin St.,
CONCEPCION
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

MONTALBAN, RIZAL

PREM_MNT 013 VACANT LOT
L.A. 574 sqm.
YAKAL ST. Brgy. San Jose Rodriguez
Min. Bid Price: P 1,050,000.00

MUNTINLUPA

PREM_MUN 020 VACANT LOT
L.A. 432 sqm.
Orchids St., SOUTH GREENHEIGHTS
Min. Bid Price: P 1,700,000.00

QUEZON CITY

PREM_QC 021 VACANT LOT
L.A. 1,329 sqm.
Amor St., HILLTOP SUBD.,
Pasong Putik, Novaliches
Min. Bid Price: P 3,300,000.00

PREM_QC 022 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 694 sqm. F.A. 200 sqm.
DIAMOND SUBD. Brgy. Kaligayahan,
Novaliches
Min. Bid Price: P 3,532,500.00

PREM_QC 023 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 109.70 sqm.
K-VILLE TOWNHOMES, Cenocle
Drive, Culiat Tandang Sora
Min. Bid Price: P 2,600,000.00

TAGUIG

PREM_TAG 024 RSD'L LOT w/ IMPRV.
L.A. 113 sqm. F.A. 219 sqm.
Aquino St., UPPER BICUTAN
Min. Bid Price: P 1,564,350.00

PREM_TAG 025 VACANT LOT
L.A. 201 sqm.
Int. J.P. Rizal St., Juan Luna
USUSAN
Min. Bid Price: P 804,000.00

TAYTAY, RIZAL

PREM_TAY 011 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 155 sqm. F.A. 130.50 sqm.
Ma. Clara St., & Pag-asa,
BRGY. STA. ANA
Min. Bid Price: P 1,465,000.00

VALENZUELA

PREM_VAL 026 SCHOOL
L.A. 287 sqm. F.A. 190 sqm.
Jasmin St. DE CASTRO SUBD.
Pasoe de Blas
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

BULACAN

PREM_BUL 029 VACANT LOT
L.A. 2,387 sqm.
Camias San Miguel Road,
SAN MIGUEL
Min Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

PREM_BUL 030 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 554 sqm. F.A. 55 sqm.
Mercado Ext. cor. Daang Bakal,
BRGY. TIAONG PULONGGUBAT,
Guiguinto
Min. Bid Price: P 1,000,000.00

PREM_BUL 031 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,030 sqm. F.A. 90 sqm.
Sampaguitahan St., BRGY. SAN
VICENTE, Sta. Maria
Min. Bid Price: P 1,300,000.00

PREM_BUL 032 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 1,100 sqm.
Int. San Marcos Rd.,
BRGY. SAN MARCOS, Calumpit
Min. Bid Price: P 400,000.00

PREM_BUL 033 VACANT LOT
L.A. 729 sqm.
Buencamino St., BRGY. SAN JOSE,
San Miguel
Min. Bid Price: P 900,000.00

CAVITE

PREM_CVT 034 VACANT LOT
L.A. 300 sqm.
GREEN VALLEY SUBD.,
San Nicolas Bacoor
Min. Bid Price: P 450,000.00

PREM_CVT 035 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 200 sqm. F.A. 159 sqm.
Queensview St. Area A
QUEENSROW SUBD.,
Brgy. Molino Bacoor
Min. Bid Price: P 1,200,000.00

PREM_CVT 037 VACANT LOT
L.A. 249 sqm.
Cityland Ave. CITYLAND GREEN
BREEZE VILL. 6 Brgy. Biclatan,
Gen. Trias,
Min. Bid Price: P 249,000.00

PREM_CVT 038 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 150 sqm. F.A. 90 sqm.
Poblacion 2, GMA
Min. Bid Price: P 630,000.00

PREM_CVT 039 VACANT
RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 477 sqm.
CITYLAND HEIGHTS Bo. Ulong
Tubig, Carmona
Min. Bid Price: P 954,000.00

PREM_CVT 040 VACANT RSDL LOT
L.A. 332 sqm.
CITYLAND GARDEN BREEZE
VILLAGE VI, Brgy. Biklatan, Trias
Min. Bid Price: P 232,400.00

PREM_CVT 041 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 200 sqm. F.A. 88 / 49 sqm.
BRGY. STO. NIÑO (Area 1)
Bagong Bayan (DBB), Dasmariñas
Min Bid Price: P 800,000.00

PREM_CVT 042 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 180sqm.
VILLANUEVA SUBD.,
Brgy. Real, Salinas,Bacoor
Min. Bid Price: P 998,100.00

PREM_CVT 043 VACANT LOT
L.A. 595 sqm.
Ruby St., STATELAND SUBD.,
Buenavista, Gen. Trias
Min. Bid Price: P 714,000.00

LAGUNA

PREM_LGN 044 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 310 sqm. F.A. 64 sqm.
Peras St. cor. Lanzones St.
GRACIA SUBD.,
Bgy. San Antonio Biñan
Min. Bid Price: P 800,000.00

PREM_LGN 045 VACANT LOT
L.A. 200 sqm.
Muñoz Compound
BRGY. CASILE Biñan
Min. Bid Price: P 400,000.00

PREM_LGN 046 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 250 sqm. F.A. 160 sqm.
P.Zamora St., Brgy. San Miguel
Poblacion, MAJAYJAY
Min. Bid Price: P 900,000.00

PREM_LGN 047 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm. F.A. 918 sqm.
MONSERATT SUBD. Brgy. Callos
Sto. Angel Norte Sta. Cruz
Min. Bid Price: P 7,076,815.00

PREM_LGN 048 VACANT LOT
L.A. 366 sqm.
Narra St. cor. Dapdap and
Antipolo Sts., MONSERATT SUBD.
Callos Sto. Angel Sta. Cruz
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

PREM_LGN 049 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm. F.A. 257.75 sqm.
Purok 3 Masapang National H-way
BRGY. MASAPANG VICTORIA
Min. Bid Price: P 4,000,000.00

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NOTICE TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS

Please be informed that the Board of Directors approved today, 31 March 2006, the amendment of its resolution of 10 February 2006 authorizing the reclassification of the redeemed Preferred shares and unissued Preferred shares of the capital stock of the Corporation into 5.8 Billion new Preferred "B" shares with par value of ₱ 1.00 per share or the aggregate par value of ₱ 5.8 Billion, by changing the par value of the new shares from ₱ 1.00 per share to ₱ 100.00 per share and reducing the number of the new Preferred "B" shares from 5.8 Billion shares to 58 Million shares with the aggregate par value of ₱ 5.8 Billion. Except for the number of shares and the par value per share, the features of the new Preferred "B" shares approved by the Board in its resolution of 10 February 2006 shall remain the same.

The amended resolution will be submitted for the ratification of the stockholders during the Corporation's Annual Stockholders' Meeting on 07 April 2006.

Makati City, 31 March 2006.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MERCEDITA S. NOLLEDO
Senior Managing Director
& Corporate Secretary

Ayala

NOTICE OF REGULAR ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the regular annual meeting of stockholders of **AYALA CORPORATION** will be held at the Grand Ballroom of the InterContinental Manila, Ayala Ave., Makati City, on **Friday, 07 April 2006** at **9:00 A.M.** with the following

AGENDA

1. Determination of Quorum
2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
3. Annual Report
4. New Business
    - 4.1 Ratification of all Acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and of the Executive Committee adopted during the preceding year in the ordinary course of business.
    - 4.2 Ratification of the Resolution of the Board of Directors recommending the reclassification of the unissued Preferred Shares and redeemed Preferred Shares into new Preferred "B" Shares, and the amendment of Article Seventh of the Amended Articles of Incorporation to reflect the same.
5. Election of Directors (including the Independent Director)
6. Election of Auditors and Fixing of their Remuneration
7. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting
8. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record at the close of business on **28 February 2006** are entitled to notice of, and to vote at, this meeting. As per By-laws, the Stock and Transfer Books of the Corporation will be closed from **28 February to 07 March 2006**, inclusive.

Makati City, 13 February 2006.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MERCEDITA S. NOLLEDO
Senior Managing Director
& Corporate Secretary

INFOTECH

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Editor Leo Magno
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Alcatel sees Asia embracing convergent tech

By Alexander Villafania
Correspondent

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—INCREASING demand for broadband technologies in the mobile and wireless space are encouraging Asia Pacific countries to adopt convergent technologies that could deliver rich multimedia content such as IPTV, voice-over-IP, streaming video and audio.

Network infrastructure firm Alcatel is expecting Asian countries, especially those that have a critical mass of Internet and mobile users, to be the first to move toward convergent networks. By doing so, rich content can be delivered in any device through traditional fixed-line platforms or through wireless networks.

At a regional conference here, Alcatel Asia Pacific President Christian Reinaudo said operators across Asia are either implementing or starting to look into upgrading their networks to convergent infrastructure as they follow end-user trends toward rich media content.

"There is a huge appetite for innovative video and audio experience both for the mobile and fixed line space. For instance, worldwide demand for IPTV could reach 70 to 100 million users by 2010, up from 2.6 million users this year. Asia, on the other hand would expect to have 16.5 million IPTV users by 2010," Reinaudo said.

Reinaudo also said mobility is one of the key drivers for convergent networks. Mobile users, in particular, need to get personalized content straight to their mobile phones or personal digital assistants while constantly being on the go.

Reinaudo also noted that rich content services have to be priced according to consumers' capacity to enable more users to have access to multimedia services. However, he said competition from smaller and independent service providers could further push prices down as carriers and larger service providers try to compete.

Voice services would continue to drive the overall telecommunications business in Asia. However, VOIP is seen as a disruptive technology against incumbent operators but that would change as demand for VOIP pushes carriers to find new service delivery models that could still generate significant revenues for them.

Alcatel Director for Global Market Positioning Dave Hills said that across Asia revenue data services is gradually increasing while revenue from voice is slowing down. In addition, revenue from mobile phone services is also increasing and fixed-line service is almost flat.

"There are new challenges that the incumbent carriers are facing, one of which is a decrease in demand for voice services, particularly in the fixed-line space. What many Asia Pacific carriers now are doing is to come up with new service schemes that would benefit both their mobile and fixed-line business. Deploying convergent networks is a key factor," Hills said.

Hills added that there could be changes in the way independent service providers are dealing with their larger counterparts and the carriers when it

ALCATEL/B11

"Asian Brand Strategy: A New Boardroom Paradigm"
by Martin Roll
Author of "Asian Brand Strategy"

"Building a Culture of Innovation"
by Tony Fernandes
President
AirAsia

"The Brand as the Central Operating Principle"
by Joerg Breuer
President
BMW Philippines

"The Art of Innovation"
by Rene Almendras
President
Cebu Holdings, Inc.
VP for Corp. Initiatives
Ayala Land

"Driving Innovations Investment with Fiscal Soundness"
by Lorenzo Tan
President and CEO
Sun Life of Canada

"The Road Ahead for the Philippine Pharmaceutical Industry"
by Edwin Feist
President
Abbott Philippines
Regional Director
Philippines/Australia/NZ

"The Power of Ideas"
by Praveen Kenneth
Managing Director
Law and Kenneth Worldwide

"Customer Intimacy through Fashion and Mobility"
by Sandeep Khanna
Head of Marketing
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New Research Techniques in an Innovative Environment
by Issa Baron
Managing Partner
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KMU slams call center industry

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

EVEN AS THE CONTACT CENTER INDUSTRY continues to provide jobs to Filipinos, civil rights group Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) is accusing the contact center industry of being a "hub for exploitation" and even blamed the industry for stunting the country's economic growth.

KMU Spokesperson Prestoline Suyat said in a statement that Filipino contact center agents are paid much lower wages than their US counterparts, pointing to exploitation by multinational firms.

He noted that entry-level workers have an average salary of P15,000 while their US counterparts earn nearly P40,000 per month.

The Filipino contact center agent's salary also falls short of the P19,950 monthly living cost.

"With the same amount of work, our call center workers are receiving a lot less. This cost-saving measure means greater profit for the business process outsourcing (BPO) like the call center industry but translates to greater exploitation for poor countries like the Philippines," Suyat said.

KMU's attack on the contact center industry is not new since other groups have already condemned the industry. One of its critics is Bayan Muna Representative Teddy Casiño, who argued last year during a Congressional hearing that contact centers are exploiting Filipino talents to suit US firms.

Suyat said highly skilled Filipinos who graduated with degrees not related to the contact center industry are being encouraged by the government to work in dead-end jobs as contact center agents.

"[President Gloria] Arroyo serves as a pimp to the best of the present and upcoming generation of Filipinos. Call centers do not contribute to industrializing the country and yet the President is wholesaling the best graduates of education, mathematics, or even engineers from best schools to be telephone operators," Suyat said.

KMU/B11

Vista secure from attacks: Microsoft

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

VISTA, THE NEXT-GENERATION OPERATING system of Microsoft, will have more security features that will protect users from "offline" and online attacks, a Microsoft security expert told local reporters.

Steve Riley, senior program manager of Microsoft's security business and technology unit, said that Vista will definitely address more security issues inherent in Microsoft Windows operating system.

"In the past, security might have not received a lot of thought in the design of the operating system. Right now, it is part of the design," Riley said, when asked to comment on how security features will be integrated into Vista.

Vista, for instance, will feature some form of hard drive encryption that will prevent "offline" attacks by malicious users, Riley said.

In cases where a PC or a notebook is stolen, Vista will disallow users to access the computer's hard drive until they provide a correct username and password. In most cases, malicious users can access stolen hard disks by circumventing the operating system.

Vista will also have improved user access-control, meaning the operating system will provide limited access to the operating system by default. This means users will be prompted to provide username and password when they intend to switch to the "admin" mode, which gives users full control of the operating system.

The same user access-control also gives users more control of the online traffic com-

MICROSOFT/B11

Real network convergence to happen by 2010—Alcatel

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—WHILE ASIA'S TELECOMMUNICATIONS carriers are brandishing new strategies for fixed-line and mobile convergence, real convergence is not expected to happen until 2010 when all of network infrastructure performance reaches maturity, according to an executive of network equipment provider Alcatel.

Speaking at a recent Alcatel regional conference, Asia Pacific Director for Innovation and Market Development Geof Heydon said it would take another four to five years before the different network platforms such as GSM, 3G, Wifi, WiMAX and DSL reach the same level of performance.

Heydon said network convergence would take about four phases and generally, current deployment of next-generation networks is still in the second phase.

By the time the fourth phase happens, consumers would enjoy using a number of new and expanded services, such as enhanced voice-over-IP, video telephony, mobile TV, wireless delivery of business applications and enhanced managed services, among others.

"For now, consumers would still receive traditional services on separate networks. The main drivers for convergence are mobility and multiple access of services," Heydon said.

Network convergence describes the coming together of several telecommunications platforms in the fixed-line and wireless sectors to provide seamless consumer and business services to any platform and on any device.

Heydon also said that there would be reduction in costs for services in convergent networks, especially since carriers and content providers do not need to develop separate applications either for the fixed-line and mobile platforms.

"Both the market and the providers will definitely benefit from convergence. Consumers can choose where to get their services and providers can develop innovative services to offer on different platforms," Heydon said.

Alcatel sees Asia Pacific . . .

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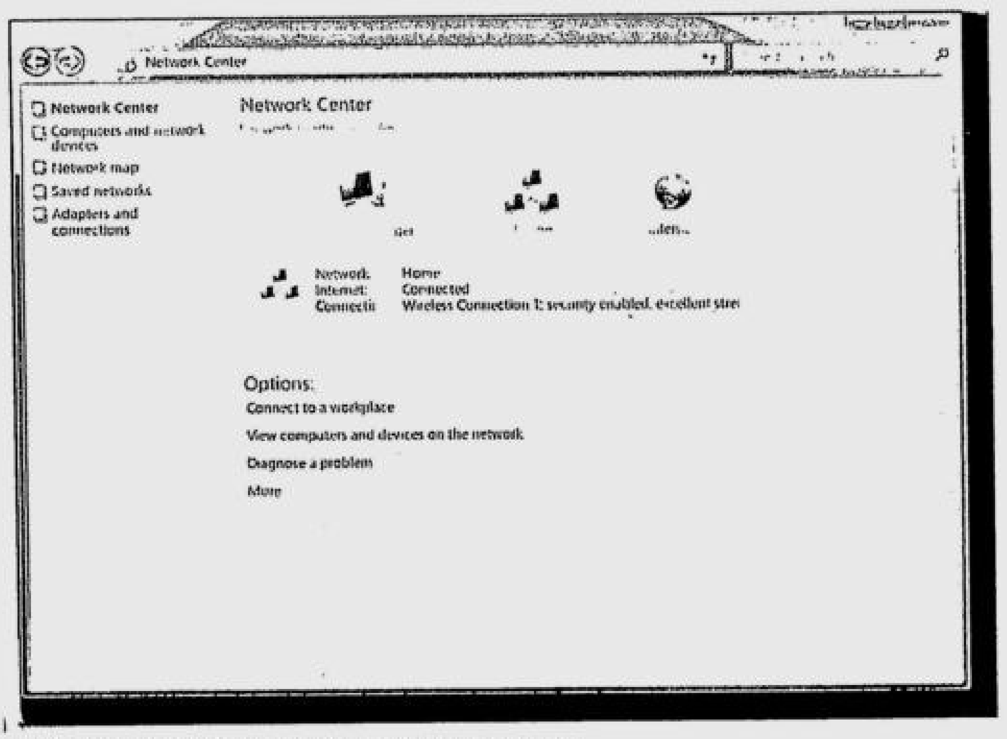
comes to revenues. By getting higher bandwidth, more rich multimedia services can be included as part of a package and carriers would have to ensure that their networks are fully utilized.

"The business for independent content providers could grow when carriers start implementing convergent networks. The opportunities are there especially when end-users demand content that they don't get from just a mobile or fixed-line network. Convergent technologies open new opportunities for the telecommunications firms and content providers," Hills said.



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Options:
Connect to a workplace
View computers and devices on the network
Diagnose a problem
More

SCREENSHOT of Microsoft's Vista Network Center

Microsoft says Vista . . .

From page B10

ing through a network and into the PC, he said. "You can block torrent traffic using Vista's firewall settings," he added.

On the other hand, Riley stressed that Microsoft has designed Vista on the premise that online attacks on Windows applications are increasing.

"Microsoft is helping application developers [independent software vendors] create more secure applications," he said.

The commercial launch of consumer version of Vista has been delayed to January 2007. The business version will be made available on November this year.

The Microsoft security expert said that the software company is integrating more security features on Vista based on feedback it gets from users.

"Enterprises should understand, for instance, that the PC is no longer a personal computer. It is an organizational computer. It is an asset to a company," he said.

Microsoft, however, has to contend with designing a secure operating system that will have some "fundamental trade offs," Riley said. A secure Vista does not necessarily mean users will have an easy-to-use and cheap operating system.

KMU . . .

From page B10

Suyat added: "President Arroyo gives false hopes to our countrymen while at the same time promoting anti-worker policies such as retrenchments which they call rationalization or streamlining of bureaucracy. How can middle-aged or retirable employees work in call centers when the industry work schedule means working during graveyard shifts? This is the main reason why there low blood levels are the norm for call center agents caused or aggravated by lack of sleep due to work schedules."

Suyat cited studies by the Quezon City-based Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research Inc. pointing to a decrease in output of local factories to 2.8 percent in January due to migration of skilled workers to contact centers, which is promoting globalization.

The contact center industry currently has about 80,000 employed workers, making it one of the biggest industry sector employers in the country. It is also estimated to have earned close to US$1 billion in 2005.

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Construction of R.C. Building divided into cubicles with roll-up doors calling for demolition of existing structure earthwork (excavation), concrete, reinforcing bars, masonry, roofing, plumbing works, installation of doors, windows, and steel grill, panting and electrical works.
(Brief Description of Works)

1. The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA**, through the General Fund [AB] FY-2005 intends to apply the sum of **FIVE MILLION ONE HUNDRED NINETEEN THOUSAND SEVENTY TWO AND 87/100 PESOS (P5,119,072.87) ONLY** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for **Construction / Rehabilitation of Public Market Building (Main) R-G, Zone IV, ZC.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.
2. The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** now calls for the submission of Letter of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for ***Construction of R.C. Building divided into cubicles with roll-up doors calling for demolition of existing structure earthwork (excavation), concrete, reinforcing bars, masonry, roofing, plumbing works, installation of doors, windows, and steel grill, panting and electrical works.*** Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC and to meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs on or before **April 18, 2006** at Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Office, City Hall, Zamboanga City and secure the Eligibility Documents there from. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day of the submission of the accomplished eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents on **April 19, 2006** at 10:00 A.M. in the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Office, City Hall, Zamboanga City. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act" and is restricted unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat at Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Office, City Hall, Zamboanga City on or before **April 19, 2006 at 10:00 A.M.**
5. Interested Eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 am to 5:00pm, **starting April 24 to May 2, 2006.**
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidder that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **P3,000.00**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before **May 3, 2006** at 10:00 A.M.
7. The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all Eligible Bidders on **May 4, 2006** at 10:00 A.M. in the City Engineer's Office, Conference Room, City Hall, Zamboanga City.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before **May 17, 2006 at 10:00AM.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of **Cash, Check, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check** payable to the City Treasurer **Bank Draft, Irrevocable Letter of Credit** and in an amount of **P51,190.73** or **Bank Guarantee** in the amount of **P76,786.09** or **Surety Bond** in the amount of **P127,976.82** or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on **May 17, 2006** at **10:00AM.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at 10:00 A.M. in the City Engineer's Office, Conference Room, City Hall, Zamboanga City.
9. Completion of the Works is required by **One Hundred Ten [110]** calendar days.
10. The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division
Milagros WS. Saavedra
City Hall, N.S. Valderosa Street
Zamboanga City
Tel No. (062) 991-0862
Telefax No. (062) 992-7763

(Sgd.) **Dr. MARIO D. ARRIOLA**
BAC Chairman

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ITPM Faculty

Prof. Ricky Lim, Ph.D. is Program Director of the IT Project Management. He is the Associate Dean of the AIM W. SyCip Graduate School of Business (WGSB). He specializes in information technology and management communication. Prof. Lim completed his Bachelor in Management Information Systems (Magna Cum Laude) from McGill University- Montreal, Canada (1982). He holds a Master in Business Administration from Darden School, University of Virginia and a doctorate degree from the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California. His dissertation is on "Cognitive Maps in ISD Teams".

Prof. Arup Maity, PMP, MBA is the founder and currently President and CEO of Blastasia, Inc., a leading provider of Internet-based Customer Relationship Management solutions. His organizational abilities and his understanding of the different Internet programming languages have helped in the conceptualization and implementation of the Blastasia software modules. He is a qualified Civil Engineer from Govt. Engineering College Jabalpore, India; his engineering thesis was on computer aided designing of properties. Arup Maity had been the Director handling the Business Planning Division at Landco Property Holding Corp after completing his MBA from the Asian Institute of Management in 1997.

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GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING REMITTANCES AND DISBURSEMENTS OF THE UNIVERSAL CHARGE

(Revised as per ERC Order dated 5 January 2006)

WHEREAS, Section 34 of Republic Act No. 9136 otherwise known as the "Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001" (the "Act" or "EPIRA") provides that a Universal Charge to be determined, fixed and approved by the Energy Regulatory Commission ("ERC") shall be imposed on all End-Users for the following purposes:

1. Stranded Debts and Stranded Contract Costs of National Power Corporation ("NPC") in excess of the amount to be assumed by the Government of the Philippines;
2. Stranded Contract Costs of Distribution Utilities;
3. Missionary Electrification;
4. The equalization of the taxes and royalties applied to indigenous or renewable sources of energy vis-à-vis imported energy fuels;
5. An environmental charge equivalent to one-fourth of one centavo per kilowatt-hour (P0.0025/kWh), which shall accrue to an environmental fund to be used solely for watershed rehabilitation and management and shall be managed by NPC under existing arrangements; and
6. A charge to account for all forms of cross-subsidies for a period not exceeding three (3) years.

WHEREAS, Section 5 of Rule 18 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of EPIRA ("IRR") mandates that the Universal Charge shall be a non-by passable charge which shall be (1) collected from all End-Users on a monthly basis by the Distribution Utilities or Suppliers in case of a Contestable Market; or (2) remitted directly to the National Transmission Corporation ("Transco") or its Concessionaire by any End-Users or Self Generation Entities not connected to a Distribution Utility.

WHEREAS, Section 7 of Rule 18 of the IRR provides that all Self-Generation Facilities whether new, existing or under construction shall not be covered by the imposition of Universal Charge for a period of four (4) years from its imposition: *Provided*, That, such Self-Generation Facilities shall register with the ERC and PSALM.

WHEREAS, Section 34 of the Act mandates PSALM to be the administrator of the Universal Charge funds and requires PSALM to establish Special Trust Funds ("STFs") for this purpose.

WHEREAS, there is a need to establish procedures for the remittance and disbursement of the Universal Charge and for the timely provision of accurate information in relation thereto, to ensure that the objectives of the Universal Charge are achieved and to enable PSALM to fulfill its obligations under the Act.

WHEREAS, Section 6 (b) of Rule 18 of the IRR requires PSALM, in consultation with the DOF and with the approval of the ERC, to promulgate procedures and guidelines to govern all remittances to and disbursements from the Special Trust Funds.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing, PSALM promulgates these "Amended Guidelines and Procedures Governing the Remittances and Disbursements of the Universal Charge" as follows.

Section 1: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In compliance with the EPIRA and its IRR, these Guidelines are being issued by PSALM for:

(a) the remittance to the Special Trust Funds of the Universal Charge amounts collected or received by Distribution Utilities, Suppliers, and TRANSCO or its Concessionaire;
(b) the administration by PSALM of the STFs;
(c) the provision of information to PSALM so that it may comply with its obligations for the management of Universal Charge funds; and
(d) the disbursement of the Universal Charge by PSALM to the Beneficiaries in accordance with their entitlements as determined and approved by the ERC.

Section 2: DEFINITION OF TERMS

2.01 Defined Terms: The following terms and expressions shall have the meanings set forth below:

"*Act*" or "*EPIRA*" refers to Republic Act No. 9136, otherwise known as the "Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001";

"*Beneficiaries*" means the entities eligible or authorized by the ERC to avail of the Universal Charge pursuant to EPIRA and its IRR as enumerated in Section 3.02 (*STFs and their Beneficiaries*);

"*BTr*" refers to the Bureau of Treasury;

"*Collecting Entities*" refers to (1) Distribution Utilities or Suppliers in case of Contestable Markets; and (2) TRANSCO or its Concessionaire in respect of End-Users and Self-Generation Entities not connected to a Distribution Utility;

"*Concessionaire*" has the meaning as defined in the EPIRA and its IRR and, for the avoidance of doubt, references herein to TRANSCO shall apply equally to the Concessionaire once the Concessionaire has been appointed to assume TRANSCO's responsibilities;

"*Contestable Market*" has the meaning as defined in the EPIRA and its IRR;

"*Demand Draft*" refers to a check issued by a bank with guaranteed funding. This is negotiable only within provincial branches. This instrument is usually coded for security purposes;

"*Distribution Utility*" has the meaning as defined in the EPIRA and its IRR;

"*DOE*" refers to the Department of Energy, the government agency created pursuant to Republic Act No. 7638 whose expanded functions are provided in the Act;

"*DOF*" refers to the Department of Finance, the government agency created pursuant to Executive Order No. 127;

"*End-User*" has the meaning as defined in the EPIRA and its IRR;

"*Energy Regulatory Commission*" or "*ERC*" refers to the regulatory agency created by Section 38 of the Act;

"*ERC Rules*" refers to the "ERC Rules Governing the Collection of the Universal Charge;

"*Government Financial Institution*" or "*GFI*" refers to financial institutions or corporations wholly owned and controlled by the National Government. For purposes of these Guidelines, the GFI must be acceptable to the DOF;

"*Guidelines*" refers to these "Guidelines and Procedures Governing the Remittances and Disbursements of the Universal Charge";

"*IRR*" refers to the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the EPIRA;

"*Main Trust Account – Universal Charge*" means the bank account established by PSALM either with the BTr or a GFI acceptable by the DOF, purposely and exclusively for receiving the remittance of the Universal Charge collections from the Collecting Entities;

"*Manager's/Cashier's Check*" refers to a check issued by a bank with guaranteed funding. This instrument must be negotiable within Metro Manila only;

"*Market Operator*" shall have the same meaning as defined in the EPIRA and its IRR;

"*Missionary Electrification*" has the meaning as defined in the EPIRA and its IRR;

"*National Power Corporation*" or "*NPC*" refers to the government corporation created pursuant to Republic Act No. 6395, as amended

"*National Transmission Corporation*" or "*TRANSCO*" refers to the government corporation created pursuant to Section 8 of the EPIRA. References to TRANSCO in these Guidelines shall also be deemed as references to its Concessionaire;

"*Person*" refers to a natural or juridical person, as the case may be;

"*Petitioners*" refers to the Persons entitled to petition the ERC for availment of the Universal Charge as provided in Section 3.01 (Petitioners for Availment);

"*Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation*" or "*PSALM*" refers to the government owned and controlled corporation created pursuant to Section 49 of the EPIRA;

"*Qualified Third Parties*" or "*QTPs*" refers to persons who meet the qualifications set by the DOE and who obtain the necessary permits from the ERC and any other agency as may be required to be an indirect beneficiary of a portion of the Universal Charge for Missionary Electrification;

"*Self-Generation Entity*" or "*Self-Generation Facility*" has the meaning as defined in the EPIRA and its IRR;

"*Small Power Utilities Group*" or "*SPUG*" refers to the functional unit of NPC created to pursue missionary electrification function;

"*Special Trust Fund*" or "*STF*" refers to a trust fund established by PSALM for each intended purpose of the Universal Charge and its corresponding Beneficiary or Beneficiaries as enumerated in Section 3.02 (*STFs and their Beneficiaries*);

"*STF Account*" means an account opened by PSALM either with the BTr or a GFI acceptable to the DOF, purposely and exclusively for remittances to or disbursements of the Universal Charge;

"*Stranded Contract Costs of Distribution Utilities*" has the same meaning as "Stranded Contract Costs of Eligible Contracts of Distribution Utilities" as defined in the IRR;

"*Stranded Contract Costs of NPC*" has the meaning as defined in the EPIRA and its IRR;

"*Stranded Debts of NPC*" or "*Stranded Debts*" has the meaning as defined in the EPIRA and its IRR;

"*Supplier*" has the meaning as defined in the EPIRA and its IRR;

"*Universal Charge*" has the meaning as defined in the EPIRA and its IRR.

"*WESM Rules*" shall refer to the rules governing the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market ("WESM"), promulgated by the DOE in its Department Circular No. 2002-06-003, dated 28 June 2002;

"*Wholesale Electricity Spot Market*" or "*WESM*" refers to the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market to be created in accordance with RA 9136.

2.02 Rules of Construction: Unless the context otherwise requires:

(a) Words singular and plural in number shall be deemed to include the other;

(b) Section headings are for convenience of reference only, do not form part of these Guidelines, and shall not be deemed to limit or otherwise affect any of the provisions hereof. References to Sections, unless otherwise indicated, are references to sections of these Guidelines;

(c) In the event that any of the capitalized terms above are defined through reference to the EPIRA and its IRR, in the event of a conflict, the EPIRA definition shall govern; and

(d) In the event that any of the capitalized terms above are defined through reference to the EPIRA and its IRR and such definition appears only in the EPIRA or the IRR, the term is deemed to have been defined by the document wherein the definition of such term appears.

The applicable laws, including the EPIRA, its IRR and other applicable government regulations, are incorporated herein by reference.

Section 3: COVERAGE

3.01 Petitioners for Availment: The following are entitled to petition the ERC for availment of the Universal Charge for each of the intended purposes:

(1) PSALM for Stranded Debt and Stranded Contract Costs of NPC;
(2) Distribution Utilities with respect to their respective Stranded Contract Costs;
(3) SPUG, for Missionary Electrification;
(4) Generation companies with respect to the equalization of taxes and royalties between indigenous or renewable energy resources and imported fuels;
(5) NPC with respect to the environmental charge of one-fourth of one centavo per kilowatt-hour (P 0.0025/kWh) of sales; and
(6) NPC/PSALM and Distribution Utilities with respect to the mitigation of the removal of cross subsidies.

3.02 STFs and their Beneficiaries: These Guidelines cover the following STFs to be established by PSALM, as provided in Section 4.02 (The STFs), for each intended purpose identified in Section 3.01 (Petitioners for Availment), and their respective beneficiaries:

(1) Stranded Debts and Stranded Contract Costs of NPC for PSALM;
(2) Stranded Contract Costs for Distribution Utilities as authorized by the ERC;
(3) Missionary Electrification for SPUG;
(4) Equalization of taxes and royalties between indigenous or renewable energy resources and imported fuels for generation companies so authorized by the ERC;
(5) Environmental charge of one-fourth of one centavo per kilowatt-hour (P 0.0025/kWh) of sales for NPC; and
(6) Mitigation of the removal of cross-subsidies for NPC/PSALM and Distribution Utilities.

The Petitioners shall be deemed the Beneficiaries with respect to their corresponding STFs only upon and to the extent of the approval by the ERC of their petition for availment of the Universal Charge.

3.03 Collecting Entities: These Guidelines apply to the following entities mandated by the Act to collect or receive the Universal Charge, as set out in the ERC Rules Governing the Collection of the Universal Charge:

(1) Distribution Utilities collecting from End-Users in the captive market;
(2) Suppliers collecting from End-Users in a contestable market;
(3) TRANSCO or its Concessionaire collecting the amounts remitted by End-Users and Self-Generation Entities which are not connected to a Distribution System.

Section 4: CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

4.01 The Main Trust Account – Universal Charge

(a) PSALM shall open one (1) Trust account, referred to as the "Main Trust Account – Universal Charge", with the BTr or a GFI acceptable to the DOF. Collecting Entities shall deposit their collections of the Universal Charge in the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge.

(b) Within ten (10) business days of the approval of these Guidelines by the ERC, PSALM shall provide the Collecting Entities with the bank details and account number of the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge.

(c) If there are any amendments to the bank details and account number of the Main Trust Account-Universal Charge, PSALM shall notify all of the Collecting Entities as soon as possible but in any case within ten (10) business days from the effectivity of such amendments.

4.02 The STFs

(a) Pursuant to Section 6(a) of Rule 18 of the IRR, PSALM shall create one (1) separate STF for each of the six (6) intended purposes enumerated in Section 3.01 (Petitioners for Availment). These STFs shall be established with the BTr or a GFI acceptable to the DOF.

(b) PSALM will make disbursements of the Universal Charge to the respective Beneficiaries from these six (6) STFs.

(c) PSALM will enter into an appropriate agreement with the BTr or GFI detailing the terms for the maintenance of the STFs and the transfers of funds to and from the STFs. The terms of the agreement shall be consistent with the specific purposes for which the STFs were created in accordance with existing laws, government rules and regulations.

(d) Amounts remitted to the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge will be allocated to the six (6) STFs pursuant to Section 7(c).

(e) Any interest earned on monies in an STF Account shall form part of such STF and shall be used for the same specified purpose.

(f) The charges, expenses, fees and other costs imposed by the GFI or BTr for the administration of the STFs shall be monitored and accounted for by PSALM. The charges, expenses, fees and other costs shall be debited to each of the STFs *pro rata* to the amount of money passing through each STF.

Section 5: REMITTANCE OF UNIVERSAL CHARGE BY COLLECTING ENTITIES

5.01 Remittance Procedures: To avoid the penalties and unnecessary costs brought about by a delay in the remittance of the Universal Charge, the Collecting Entities shall faithfully comply with the procedures set forth below:

(a) Subject to Section 5.03 ("*Allowed Withholding of Universal Charge*"), each Collecting Entity shall remit its total actual collections of the Universal Charge to the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge without need of prior demand from PSALM.

(b) The Universal Charge amounts collected during each calendar month shall be remitted to the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge on or before the last banking hour of the fifteenth (15th) day of the succeeding month. In the event that the fifteenth (15th) day of the succeeding month falls on a non-banking day or holiday, all Universal Charge collections shall be remitted to the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge on or before the last banking hour on the immediately succeeding banking day.

(c) *For proper control and timely recording, each Collecting Entity shall submit to PSALM all the necessary information pertaining to billing of the Universal Charge for the calendar month as required under Section 6 ("Provision of Information") on the twentieth (20th) day of the succeeding calendar month. Similarly, information on collection and remittance of Universal Charge for the calendar month as required under Section 6 ("Provision of Information") shall be submitted to PSALM on the fifteenth (15th) day of the succeeding calendar month, to coincide with the date of remittance.*

(d) All remittances of the Universal Charge shall be in Philippines Pesos and shall be made through any one of the following forms, in each case clearly identifying the Collecting Entity and the billing and collection month to which the remittance pertains:

(1) Cash
(2) Manager's/Cashier's Check
(3) Demand Draft
(4) Fund Transfer
(5) Company Check

(e) PSALM shall confirm with the BTr or GFI the amount of the Universal Charge remitted to the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge by each Collecting Entity in each month. PSALM shall issue a confirmation notice to each Collecting Entity within five (5) business days confirming the receipt of its funds in the Main Trust Account-Universal Charge.

5.02 Late Remittances: Subject to Section 5.03 ("*Allowed Withholding of Universal Charge*"), failure of a Collecting Entity to remit without justifiable or valid reason its total actual collections of the Universal Charge in each calendar month in accordance with Section 5.01 ("*Remittance Procedures*") shall subject such Collecting Entity to a late remittance interest charge and the fines and penalties provided in Section 8 of Rule 18 of the IRR. The procedures for late remittances are as follows:

(a) In the event that any Collecting Entity collects amounts from End-Users in respect of the Universal Charge in any calendar month but fails to remit the same to the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge on or before the last banking hour of the fifteenth (15th) day of the next calendar month, said Collecting Entity shall pay a late remittance interest charge on the amount collected and due but not remitted. The late remittance interest charge shall be applied to the difference between total actual collections of the Universal Charge for any calendar month and total actual remittances for said month, and will be calculated at the rate of five percent (5%) per month from the date upon which the remittance amount was due until the date when such amount is received in the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge.

(b) The late remittance interest charge shall be in addition to whatever amount of fine or penalty may be imposed by the ERC under Section 8 of Rule 18 of the IRR.

(c) Any late remittance interest charges shall be remitted to the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge for disbursement to the STFs pro rata to the allocation of other remittances between the STFs.

(d) PSALM reserves the right to withhold any due disbursements of the Universal Charge to a Collecting Entity which has failed to remit its collections to the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge or require the Collecting Entity to pay the late remittance interest charges in accordance with the procedures described herein.

(e) In the event that any Collecting Entity consistently delays in or fails to remit its Universal Charge collections for more than two (2) months, PSALM shall request the ERC to take appropriate action under Rule 18 of the IRR.

5.03 Allowed Withholding of Universal Charge: A Collecting Entity which is a Distribution Utility authorized by the ERC to avail of the Universal Charge for Stranded Contract Costs of Distribution Utilities in any calendar month is entitled to withhold from its remittance to the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge an amount reflecting the Universal Charge approved by the ERC for such purpose for the relevant month, in accordance with the procedure provided in this Section:

(a) In determining the amount which a Distribution Utility can net off from its remittance of the Universal Charge to PSALM, the Distribution Utility shall not discriminate in its own favor at the expense of other beneficiaries in the event that actual collections differ from expected collections based on the level of kilowatt-hour sales used by ERC in setting the Universal Charge per kilowatt-hour (kWh). In such case, the Distribution Utility shall only retain its proportionate share in the actual collection.

(b) For the avoidance of doubt, a Distribution Utility must remit to the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge the amounts of Universal Charge collected from its End-Users pertaining to the other categories of Universal Charge. The balance of a Distribution Utility's entitlement to Universal Charge for Stranded Contract Costs of Distribution Utilities for any month will be disbursed to said Distribution Utility by PSALM from the Universal Charge amounts collected for that purpose by other Collecting Entities, in accordance with Section 7 ("*Disbursements from the STFs*").

(c) Under no circumstances may a Distribution Utility withhold from its remittances to the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge in respect of any month such amount in excess of that which the ERC has authorized said Distribution Utility to recover from the Universal Charge for its Stranded Contract Costs for that month.

Section 6: PROVISION OF INFORMATION

6.01 Reporting Requirements and Procedures

(a) In order for PSALM to monitor the proper remittance of Universal Charge collections by Collecting Entities for the protection of all End-Users, each Collecting Entity must furnish PSALM with relevant information on its billings and collections in each calendar month. The Market Operator is also required to submit information as set out in Section 6.04 so that PSALM may verify the information provided by Collecting Entities.

(b) *The statements or information described in Sections 6.02 through 6.03 pertaining to billings in respect of each calendar month should be submitted to PSALM (by electronic mail or facsimile transmission) by each Collecting Entity to arrive on or before the twentieth (20th) day of the succeeding month. Likewise, information pertaining to monthly collections and remittances should be submitted to PSALM (by electronic mail or facsimile transmission) by each Collecting Entity to arrive on or before the fifteenth (15th) day of the succeeding month.* For documents sent by electronic mail or facsimile transmission, the original of said statement or report must be provided to PSALM within ten (10) business days from the remittance of the Universal Charge.

6.02 Reports by Distribution Utilities and Suppliers: In respect of each calendar month, each Collecting Entity that is a Distribution Utility or Supplier shall submit to PSALM:

(a) A certified statement of its total actual billings of electricity separately identifying the total amount billed in respect of each Universal Charge component. Such statement shall include the total actual sales of electricity in kWh. The form for the Universal Charge Total Actual Billings Statement and sample calculations are attached hereto as Annex A1 and A2, respectively.

Billing adjustments due to erroneous meter reading, or arithmetical mistakes or omissions shall be reflected in the Universal Charge Billing Form, duly supported by a certified true copy of the debit or credit memo issued by the Collecting Entity to the concerned customer.

Billing adjustments covering bad debts written off shall likewise be reflected in the Universal Charge Billing Form, duly supported by documents.

(b) A certified statement of its total actual collections separately identifying the amount collected for each Universal Charge component. The form for the Universal Charge Total Actual Collections and sample calculations are attached hereto as Annex B1 and B2, respectively.

(c) The statements identified in Sections 6.02(a) and 6.02(b) must be signed by the Chief Financial Officer or his equivalent or any authorized representative of such Collecting Entity.

(d) A Collecting Entity which is a Distribution Utility authorized by the ERC to collect an amount of Universal Charge in respect of its own Stranded Contract Cost must identify in its statement under Section 6.02(a) the amount which it is authorized by the ERC to avail from the Universal Charge for this purpose in the relevant calendar month and the amount which it has billed to its End-Users for this purpose in the relevant calendar month. In its statement under Section 6.02(b), said Distribution Utility shall identify separately the amount collected from its End-Users for this purpose and the amount withheld from its remittance to the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge under Section 5.03 ("*Allowed Withholding of Universal Charge*").

6.03 Reports by TRANSCO

(a) TRANSCO shall submit the statements described in Section 6.02 ("*Reports by Distribution Utilities and Suppliers*") in respect of its invoices to and collections from End-Users which are connected to the transmission system and not connected to a distribution system. In case TRANSCO does not meter and/or invoice any such End-Users on the basis of kilowatt hours of sales, TRANSCO will include in its statement under Section 6.02(a) the basis on which it has estimated the kilowatt hours consumed by such End-Users in determining the Universal Charge amounts which it has invoiced.

(b) In respect of amounts remitted to TRANSCO (or its Concessionaire, as the case may be) by Self-Generation Entities not connected to a Distribution Utility, TRANSCO shall submit to PSALM a copy of the information which has been provided to TRANSCO by the Self-Generation Entities in support of their remittances. TRANSCO may summarize such information in the event that it is voluminous.

6.04 Reports by Market Operator: No later than the fifteenth (15th) day of each calendar month, the Market Operator shall submit to PSALM a summary of its actual meter readings in kilowatt hours for the immediately preceding calendar month separately identifying each metering point and the corresponding Distribution Utility, Supplier or End-User connected to the transmission system.

6.05 Reports by NPC-SPUG: No later than the twentieth (20th) day of each calendar month, the National Power Corporation – Strategic Power Utilities Group (NPC-SPUG) shall submit to PSALM a summary of its actual meter readings in kilowatt hours for the immediately preceding calendar month separately identifying each metering point and the corresponding Distribution Utility, supplier or End-User in the SPUG area.

Section 7: DISBURSEMENTS FROM THE STFs

(a) The STFs shall be disbursed only for the specific purposes for which the same were created in accordance with existing laws, government rules and regulations.

(b) The STFs shall be disbursed and accounted for in accordance with the fundamental requirements for disbursement of trust funds as provided for under applicable law, including the Government Auditing Code of the Philippines (Presidential Decree 1445) and the Government Accounting and Auditing Manual promulgated by the Commission on Audit.

(c) The BTr or GFI shall distribute all the funds received in the Main Trust Account – Universal Charge to the STFs based on instructions issued by PSALM no later than the 19th day of each calendar month (or, if this is a non-banking day or holiday, the next succeeding business day) reflecting the Beneficiaries' proportionate entitlements to avail of the Universal Charge.

(d) To facilitate close monitoring of disbursements from the STFs and their use for the intended purpose:

(1) Each Beneficiary shall promptly furnish PSALM with a certified true copy of the order (or other relevant ruling) issued by the ERC setting out the Beneficiary's entitlement to the Universal Charge in respect of each year or each calendar month, as the case may be.
(2) In respect of each calendar month and consistent with the information provided under Section 7(d)(1), each Beneficiary shall properly complete and certify the Universal Charge Disbursement Request Form as found in Annex C and submit the same to PSALM on or before the seventeenth (17th) day of the next calendar month.
(3) PSALM will make no disbursement to any Beneficiary from any of the STF Accounts unless the Universal Charge Disbursement Request Form is accomplished in all respects and has been presented to the satisfaction of PSALM on or before the seventeenth (17th) day of the next calendar month.
(4) Subject to Section 7(d)(4) and Section 7(f), PSALM shall instruct the BTr or GFI to disburse funds from the relevant STF Account to the Beneficiary on the twentieth (20th) day of each month (or, if this is a non-banking day or holiday, the next succeeding business day), either through funds transfer or Manager's Check. In case of payment by Manager's Check, the Beneficiary's authorized representative shall have to appear at the PSALM offices with all relevant documents to demonstrate such authority to claim the Manager's Check.
(5) Within five (5) calendar days from its receipt of the funds so disbursed, each Beneficiary must issue an official receipt in favor of PSALM. PSALM reserves the right to make no further disbursements to any Beneficiary until it has issued such official receipt for the disbursement.

(e) In the event that the balance in any STF Account for any calendar month exceeds the amount of the availment request or requests submitted by the Beneficiary or Beneficiaries of such account for such month, PSALM shall retain the balance within the STF Accounts to pay for periods where a shortfall occurs.

(f) In the event that the balance in any STF Account for any calendar month falls short of the Universal Charge availment request submitted by the Beneficiary of such account for such month, PSALM shall instruct the BTr or GFI to disburse only such amount not exceeding that which is in the STF Account. In the event that there are multiple Beneficiaries of any such STF Account, PSALM shall instruct the BTr or GFI to disburse the balance available in the account between the Beneficiaries *pro rata* to the Beneficiaries' availment requests for that month. The Beneficiary or Beneficiaries shall be entitled to recover any such shortfall in a later month in accordance with the true-up mechanism approved by the ERC for the relevant Universal Charge purpose.

(g) Nothing in these Guidelines shall restrict the right of NPC (SPUG) to disburse a portion of the Missionary Electrification component of the Universal Charge to QTPs provided such disbursement is in accordance with law and with the approval of the DOE and ERC.

Section 8: AUDIT AND REPORTING

(a) Acting in its capacity as administrator of the STF Accounts, PSALM shall:

(1) Maintain monthly records of each component of Universal Charge billings. collections, remittances and disbursements.
(2) Reconcile each component of Universal Charge billings, collections, and remittances with the books of accounts of Collecting Entities.
(3) Maintain records of Universal Charge availments due and paid to each of the Beneficiaries in each month, including separate books of accounts for over-recovery of the Distribution Utility stranded cost component.
(4) Reconcile Universal Charge availments due and paid to each of the Beneficiaries with the books of accounts of Beneficiaries on a monthly basis.
(5) Whenever requested by the ERC, inform the ERC of the outstanding balance of each of the STF.

(b) As required by Section 6 (d) of Rule 18 of the IRR, PSALM shall submit to the DOF and ERC on a quarterly basis a report on the remittances and disbursements of the STFs.

(c) As required by Section 3 (f) of Rule 13 of the IRR, PSALM shall ensure that SPUG conducts proper monitoring, accounting and control of expenditures and efficient utilization of the Missionary Electrification funds from the Universal Charge. SPUG shall submit to PSALM a detailed yearly report containing:

(1) Historical actual Operating Costs separately identifying expenditures on fuel, lubricants, purchased power, personal services, and other operating and maintenance expenses for the prior year and projected Operating Costs for the same categories for the current year and the next succeeding two years.
(2) Historical actual Capital Expenditures for expansion, rehabilitation and installation of facilities for new areas of development based on the approved MEDP for the prior year and projected Capital Expenditures for the same categories for the current year and the next succeeding two years.

(d) As required by Section 5 (b) of Rule 18 of the IRR, each Collecting Entity shall maintain separate books of accounts for the collections and remittances to PSALM of the Universal Charge. Such books of accounts must be made available to the ERC and PSALM during business hours upon two (2) days prior written notice.

(e) As required by Section 6 (e) of Rule 18 of the IRR, PSALM shall maintain separate books of accounts for the disbursements to Distribution Utilities of the Universal Charge for Stranded Contract Costs of Distribution Utilities and shall use the same to determine whether there has been any over-recovery by any Distribution Utility. PSALM will make such books of accounts available to the ERC for purposes of monitoring and accounting for sums collected from the Universal Charge.

(f) Each Collecting Entity shall submit to PSALM a yearly audited report of total actual collections and total actual remittances of the Universal Charge.

(g) In the event that PSALM discovers any discrepancy between expected and actual

(Continued on page B13)

Call center offers free training to boost talent pool

By Daxim L. Lucas

AMID A GOVERNMENT DRIVE TO boost the local call center industry, one Cebu-based operation is already responding to the call to help train more personnel to meet rising demand.

In a press statement, ExcelAsia Cebu said that it has trained and re-trained over 4,000 call center applicants since it started operations in August 2005.

This revelation comes a few days after President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the setting up of a scholarship program that would train up to 100,000 Filipinos to boost the local call center talent pool.

ExcelAsia, which claims to be "the fastest growing call center training and development organization," said that its applicants would receive training for free.

"Those who qualify after training are sent to ExcelAsia's call center partners," the company statement said. "Due to the excellent performance of its graduates, the company has been winning more contracts and projects from call centers in Cebu and Manila."

ExcelAsia will open a new site in Makati this month to service the growing needs of its call center partners.

"ExcelAsia's success can be attributed to a unique pre-hire training strategy," ExcelAsia president Rita Trillo-Ugarte said. "We invest in training applicants and then send them to our call center partners once they are ready."

She added that the company's English training and development curriculum was created and developed over the years with the specific needs and characteristics for Filipino trainees in mind.

According to Trillo-Ugarte, Filipinos, whether from Cebu, Manila, or other provinces, are highly trainable and can adapt to their work environment easily.

"All they need is the right kind of training and they will exceed customer expectations," she said.

The ExcelAsia chief has developed communications training modules for several international call centers and has been in the training business for nine years.

The programs have helped train "thousands of call center applicants" to speak better English and develop their confidence and customer service knowledge.

ExcelAsia trains over 100 applicants a week in Cebu. The Manila office will be bigger and can accommodate up to 500 students a week.

Brady . . .

From page B5

"It should not be an issue since, under the original plan, the government will still issue $900 million in offshore commercial bonds to complete its financing requirements for the year," one source said.

The Brady bonds were named after Nicholas Brady, the Treasury chief of the United States during the term of President Ronald Reagan. Brady proposed the issuance of the bonds to help heavily indebted countries like the Philippines restructure their commercial bank debts in the 1980s.

If the government were to issue global bonds to replace the Brady bonds, there are concerns that the state may end up paying higher commercial rates.

"Interest on dollar bonds are higher, averaging at about 7.1 percent, while Bradys cost only 6.5 percent," another government source said. "So, it doesn't make sense to issue US dollar bonds to redeem the Brady bonds."

According to the sources, the government will have to decide on the matter soon because there are Brady bonds maturing as early as June this year.

The Philippines also has outstanding Brady bonds maturing up to 2017 and 2018. The government wants to "close the chapter" on the Brady bonds, signaling that the country has climbed out of its fiscal slump.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

The country's most widely read and circulated newspaper in the country is in need of

OPERATIONS MANAGER

to manage a Distributor operation in the area of **Pampanga, Bataan, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija and Zambales.**

QUALIFICATIONS:

- At least 25 years of age;
- College graduates with background in sales and marketing;
- At least 5 years experience in all aspects of business operations;
- Highly motivated; aggressive; hardworking;
- Must possess excellent oral and written communication skills in English, Filipino and local dialects;
- Must be based within the Pampanga area, otherwise must be willing to relocate;
- Preferably male, willing to work in a fast-paced, dynamic and flexible environment.

Send your application letter and comprehensive resumé to:

GQY Distribution Group, Inc.
Penthouse, GRBank Bldg.
Dolores, San Fernando, Pampanga
Or e-mail: gqy_distribution@yahoo.com.ph
Or call: Mr. Jesse Yap at (045) 861-4676

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

The country's most widely read and circulated newspaper in the country is in need of

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUPERVISORS

to work for our provincial distributor partners in the areas of **Pampanga, Bataan, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija and Zambales.**

QUALIFICATIONS:

- College graduates with background in business courses;
- Highly motivated; aggressive; hardworking;
- Must possess excellent oral and written communication skills in English, Filipino and local dialects;
- Must be a resident of any of the above areas.
- Preferably male, willing to work on an early morning shift and in a fast-paced, dynamic and flexible environment.
- Sales-related work experience is an advantage.

Send your application letter and comprehensive resumé to:

GQY Distribution Group, Inc.
Penthouse, GRBank Bldg.
Dolores, San Fernando, Pampanga
Or call: Mr. Jesse Yap at (045)861-4676
Or email us at
gqy_distribution@yahoo.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

The country's most widely read and circulated newspaper in the country is in need of

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUPERVISORS

(for DAVAO)

to work for our provincial distributor partners

QUALIFICATIONS:

- College graduates with background in business courses;
- Highly motivated; aggressive; hardworking;
- Must possess excellent oral and written communication skills in English, Filipino and local dialects;
- Must be a resident of Davao or nearby provinces
- Preferably male, willing to work on a graveyard shift and in a fast-paced, dynamic and flexible environment.
- Sales-related work experience is an advantage.

Send your application letter and comprehensive resume to:

THE HR MANAGEMENT SERVICES HEAD
Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc.
Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo)
Corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City
Or e-mail: stan@inquirer.com.ph

(From page B12)

collections, or between actual collections and actual remittances, or any other indication that a Collecting Entity is failing to comply with these Guidelines, PSALM shall have the right to seek an explanation from such Collecting Entity or to refer the matter to the ERC for investigation.

Section 9: LIABILITY

(a) PSALM shall not be held liable by any third party, including the beneficiaries of the STFs, for any non-remittance or partial remittance should the same be attributable to the fault or negligence of any of the Collecting Entities or any of its officers, employees, agents or assigns or any other party. Any Collecting Entity who is found by final judgement to be at fault shall immediately reimburse PSALM within five (5) days from demand of any amount expended by PSALM as payment for damages, expenses and other costs, incurred and paid pursuant to any settlement or legal proceedings, whether in the nature of administrative, civil or criminal, whenever PSALM is included as a party to any proceeding due to the fault or negligence of any Collecting Entity, its officers, employees, agents or assigns.

(b) In accordance with the EPIRA, the IRR and the ERC Rules Governing the Collection of the Universal Charge, the ERC may impose sanctions on any Collecting Entity for its failure to comply with these Guidelines or any portion thereof.

Section 10: FINES AND PENALTIES

The ERC may impose the appropriate fines and penalties for any violation or non-compliance with these Guidelines as provided in Section 5 of the Guidelines to Govern the Imposition of Administrative Sanctions in the form of Fines and Penalties Pursuant to Section 46 of RA 9136 dated May 17, 2002.

Section 11: AMENDMENTS

Any amendment to, or revision of these Guidelines may be proposed by PSALM, in consultation with the DOF and subject to the approval of the ERC.

Section 12: SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

Should any provision or section of these Guidelines be declared unconstitutional or contrary to law, the parts not so declared shall remain in full force and effect.

Done in the City of Makati this 16th day of January 2006.

(Sgd.) NIEVES L. OSORIO
President and CEO
PSALM Corporation

Approved by : Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC)
Order dated 5 January 2006
ERC Case No. 2003-187

ANNEX A1

Universal Charge Billing

UC Form No.

Billing entity		Date prepared	
Address		Billing cycle	
Total actual energy sales (in KWH)			
Universal charge billed	(in pesos)		
UC 1 - Stranded debts & stranded contract costs of NPC			
UC 2 - Stranded contract costs of distribution utilities (DUs)			
UC 3 - Missionary electrification			
UC 4 - Equalization of taxes & royalties			
UC 5 - Rehabilitation & maintenance of watersheds			
UC 6 - Removal of cross-subsidies			
Total			
DU entitlement from UC for DU's stranded contract costs (in pesos)			

(Please indicate date signed)

	Printed name	Position Title	Signature
Prepared by			
Checked by			
Certified by			
Approved by			

(PSALM Acknowledgment)

	Printed name	Position Title	Signature
Received by			
Reviewed by			

ANNEX A2

Sample Completed Actual Billing Form

IF:

Billing Cycle = Jan. 1 - Jan. 31
Date Prepared = Mar. 15, 2003
Universal Charge Billed:
UC 1 = Php 2,100,00
UC 2 = Php 3,100,000
UC 3 = Php 600,000
UC 4 = Php 350,000
UC 5 = Php 400,000
UC 6 = Php 800,000
DU entitlement from UC for DU's stranded contract costs = Php 3,100,000

THEN:

Universal Charge Billing

UC Form No.

Billing entity	Date prepared 15-Mar-03		
Address	Billing cycle Jan. 1 - Jan. 31		
Total actual energy sales (in KWH)			
Universal charge billed	(in pesos)		
UC 1 - Stranded debts & stranded contract costs of NPC	2,	100	000
UC 2 - Stranded contract costs of distribution utilities (DUs)	3,	100	000
UC 3 - Missionary electrification		600	000
UC 4 - Equalization of taxes & royalties		350,	000
UC 5 - Rehabilitation & maintenance of watersheds		400,	000
UC 6 - Removal of cross-subsidies		800,	000
Total	7,	350,	000
DU entitlement from UC for DU's stranded contract costs (in pesos)	3	100	000

(Please indicate date signed)

	Printed name	Position Title	Signature
Prepared by			
Checked by			
Certified by			
Approved by			

(PSALM Acknowledgment)

	Printed name	Position Title	Signature
Received by			
Reviewed by			

(PDI–April 3 & 4, 2006)

ANNEX B1

Universal Charge Collection/Remittance

UC Form No.

Collecting entity						Date prepared	
Address						Collection Period	
Actual collections							(in pesos)
UC 1 - Stranded debts & stranded contract costs of NPC							
UC 2 - Stranded contract costs of distribution utilities (DUs)							
UC 3 - Missionary electrification							
UC 4 - Equalization of taxes & royalties							
UC 5 - Rehabilitation & maintenance of watersheds							
UC 6 - Removal of cross-subsidies							
Total							
Application of collections	UC 1	UC 2	UC 3	UC 4	UC 5	UC 6	Total
Jan Billing Period							
Feb Billing Period							
Mar Billing Period							
Apr Billing Period							
May Billing Period							
Jun Billing Period							
Jul Billing Period							
Aug Billing Period							
Sep Billing Period							
Oct Billing Period							
Nov Billing Period							
Dec Billing Period							
Total							
Less amount withheld for DU's stranded contract costs							
Amount for remittance to PSALM							
Actual amount remitted							
Unremitted collections							
Add 5% penalty							
Amount still due PSALM							
Details of remittance							
Form	☐ Cash		☐ Manager's check		☐ Demand draft		☐ Fund transfer
Amount							

(Please indicate date signed)

	Printed name	Position Title	Signature
Prepared by			
Checked by			
Certified by			
Approved by			

(PSALM Acknowledgment)

	Printed name	Position Title	Signature
Received by			
Validated by			

ANNEX B2

Sample Completed Actual Collection Form

IF:

Collection Period = Feb. 1 - Feb. 28 and Mar. 1 - Mar. 31

Actual Collections (February):	**Actual Collections (March):**
UC 1 = Php 2,000,000	UC 1 = Php 2,100,000
UC 2 = Php 3,000,000	UC 2 = Php 3,100,000
UC 3 = Php 550,000	UC 3 = Php 600,000
UC 4 = Php 300,000	UC 4 = Php 350,000
UC 5 = Php 350,000	UC 5 = Php 400,000
UC 6 = Php 750,000	UC 6 = Php 800,000

THEN:

Universal Charge Collection/Remittance

UC Form No.

Collecting entity						Date prepared 15-Apr-03	
Address						Collection Period Mar. 1 - Mar 31	
Actual collections							(In pesos)
UC 1 - Stranded debts & stranded contract costs of NPC							2,100,000
UC 2 - Stranded contract costs of distribution utilities (DUs)							3,100,000
UC 3 - Missionary electrification							600,000
UC 4 - Equalization of taxes & royalties							350,000
UC 5 - Rehabilitation & maintenance of watersheds							400,000
UC 6 - Removal of cross-subsidies							800,000
Total							7,350,000
Application of collec	UC 1	UC 2	UC 3	UC 4	UC 5	UC 6	Total
Jan Billing Period	100,000	100,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	400,000
Feb Billing Period	2,000,000	3,000,000	550,000	300,000	350,000	750,000	6,950,000
Mar Billing Period							
Apr Billing Period							
May Billing Period							
Jun Billing Period							
Jul Billing Period							
Aug Billing Period							
Sep Billing Period							
Oct Billing Period							
Nov Billing Period							
Dec Billing Period							
Total	2,100,000	3,100,000	600,000	350,000	400,000	800,000	7,350,000
Less amount withheld for DU's stranded contract costs							3,100,000
Amount for remittance to PSALM							4,250,000
Actual amount remitted							4,250,000
Unremitted collections							0
Add 5% penalty							0
Amount still due PSALM							0
Details of remittance							
Form	☐ Cash		☐ Manager's check		☐ Demand draft		☐ Fund transfer
Amount							

(Please indicate date signed)

	Printed name	Position Title	Signature
Prepared by			
Checked by			
Certified by			
Approved by			

(PSALM Acknowledgment)

	Printed name	Position Title	Signature
Received by			
Validated by			

ANNEX C

Universal Charge Disbursement

UC Form No.

Requesting entity	Date prepared
Address	
Amount requested (words)	(Figures)
Reason for the availment	

(Please indicate date signed)

	Printed name	Position Title	Signature
Prepared by			
Checked by			
Approved by			

(PSALM Acknowledgment)

	Printed name	Position Title	Signature
Received by			
Reviewed by			
Approved by			

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ADVT

RP-Russia air rights negotiations slated

By Daxim L. Lucas

AIR TRAVEL BETWEEN THE Philippines and Europe may soon become cheaper if the Philippine government succeeds in negotiating for landing rights in Russia, according to the country's top transportation official.

Speaking to reporters last week, Transportation and Communication Secretary Leandro Mendoza said air talks between the Philippine and Russian governments might start as early as this month.

"We are interested [in the route]," he said. "The nearest path to Europe is [through] Russia."

Bilateral air talks involve discussions between representatives of the two countries' foreign ministries, airline regulators and airline operators.

The talks usually involve negotiations over the number of flight frequencies and seats that each country would be entitled to. The most contentious issue often involve the right of one country's airline to land in another country and pick up passengers for passage to a third country—the so-called "fifth freedom" of aviation.

Mendoza said this particular feature would be the Philippines' main goal in the bilateral air talks, especially since it was looking at developing cheaper alternative routes for Filipino workers flying to and from Europe.

"Many of our OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) are in Europe, so this (negotiations) will help cut their costs," he said. "We want landing rights."

The transportation chief said the Philippine negotiating panel would enter the discussions with an eye for the maximum number of flight entitlements it could get from the Russian government.

It is unclear, however, if Russian authorities will agree to have local carriers fly to Europe via Russia since the Philippines has nothing to offer in return by way of a similar arrangement.

Mendoza did not indicate whether local carriers would be interested in exploiting the Russia-Europe route should the country be given landing rights. At present, flights from the Philippines to Europe are the exclusive domain of foreign carriers as Philippine Airlines believes the route is unprofitable, despite the number of Filipino workers shuttling back and forth this route yearly.

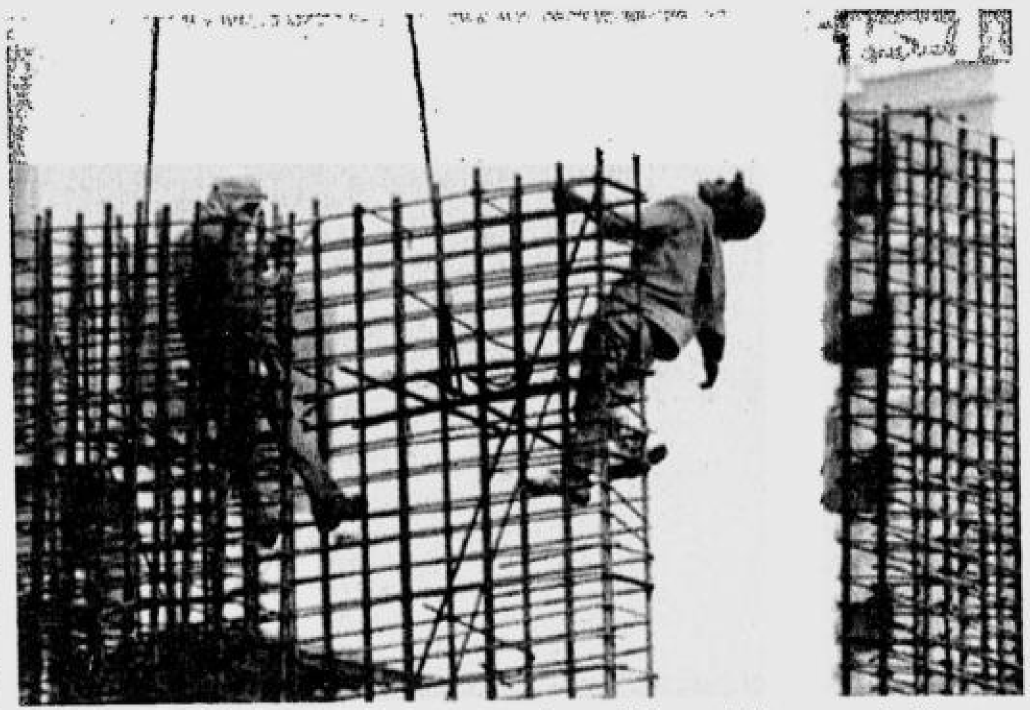
There are no direct flights between the Philippines and Russia, although the government recently started an initiative to lure Russian tourists into the country.

Mendoza said that the air talks would start within the second quarter.

Increases in steel prices seen

Pressure comes from tightness of supply in world market

By Ronnel W. Domingo



LOCAL PRICES likely to further rise as construction activities peak this summer, jacking up demand for steel products.

DOWNSTREAM STEEL COMPANIES WARNED of impending increases in the local prices of steel as the tight supply situation in the world market has driven up international prices by at least 50 percent from previous levels.

Data from the Filipino Galvanizers Institute show that prices of hot-rolled coils—the raw material used to produce cold-rolled coils, pipes, tubes, C-purlins and structural members—have gone up to a range of $450 to $550 per ton, excluding insurance and freight costs, from only $300 per ton posted in the last quarter of 2005.

Industry officials said the supply situations in many steel producing countries, especially the production hubs of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, China and Europe, were "very tight."

Cold-rolled coils, which are used to manufacture galvanized sheets and as material for appliances and vehicle assembly, now sell for between $600 and $700 a ton, representing an increase of 50 percent from the level in the fourth quarter of 2005.

Also, zinc ingots and slabs, which are the main materials for galvanized products, are "not only in short supply, their prices have also risen to historic highs" at $2,600 a ton or double last year's prices.

Before-shipment prices of raw material for the manufacture of reinforcing bars or billets are now ranging from $360 to $375 a ton, while those of scrap are averaging at $250 a ton.

Officials of local steel firms said that at such prices of imported raw materials, prices of steel construction materials such as re-enforcing bars, GI sheets, colored roofing sheets, metal pipes and structural steel would have to be increased to enable the local companies to recover higher costs of inputs.

They also said the landed costs—the price of the commodity plus insurance and freight costs—of the raw materials were now higher due to the new value added tax law.

"Had it not been for the appreciation of the peso, the adjustments in the local prices of steel would have been bigger.

Late last year, FGI president Salvio D. Perez said announcements from JFE Steel Corp.—one of Japan's biggest steel mills—that it would cut down its output by 500,000 metric tons in the fourth quarter of 2005 was expected to drive up prices.

Back then, Perez said the inflationary effet of the continued rise in crude oil prices, as well as political uncertainties in the country, was expected to aggravate the problem on the tightness of steel supply.

Gov't expects substantial cut in debt stock

By Doris C. Dumlao

TEVES

TAGAYTAY CITY—THE GOVERNMENT EXpects to scale down its total debt stock to levels way below the targets for 2006 and in the years ahead, aided by the improving fiscal picture and the peso's sharp appreciation.

Based on a new debt- reduction program presented to the international donor community, which met here for the Philippine Development Forum, the national government's debt as a ratio to the gross domestic product would drop to 68 percent by the end of the year, or lower than the original target of 74 percent, Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said.

Beltran told reporters at the sidelines of the PDF that by the year 2010, the ratio of the government's debt to GDP would slide to 43 percent, or lower than the original target of 51 percent for this year.

"The peso appreciation is one factor. The second reason is the better fiscal performance," Beltran said.

He noted that the government's budget shortfall in 2005, for instance, was kept way below government targets and that it was likely that the government would again post a budget deficit lower than the P125-billion ceiling for this year.

As of end-2005, the government's debt accounted for 72 percent of the GDP, declining from 79 percent in the previous year. During the period, the lower budget deficit substantially reduced the need for fresh borrowings.

In nominal terms, the government's total outstanding debt as of end-2005 stood at P3.89 trillion. Of the amount, P1.72 trillion or 44 percent was owed to foreign creditors and P2.17 trillion or 56 percent to domestic creditors.

For every P1 appreciation of the local currency against the US dollar, the US dollar equivalent of foreign debts shrink. For last year, the strengthening of the peso translated to more than P4 billion in interest savings for the national government.

The original program was to bring the debt- to-GDP ratio to 56 percent by 2008, when the government is expected to have wiped out its budget deficit.

Beltran said the donors had welcomed the rosier debt outlook for the Philippines and were now willing to commit more official development assistance (ODA) to the country.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said he expected the government to rely less on foreign commercial borrowings in the years ahead given the international donor community's increased confidence in the country and commitment to provide ODA.

"As we reduce deficits, interest rates decline and the challenge now is how interest rates can be brought down further to reduce intermediation costs," Teves said.

Teves said the government would work harder to spread out the benefits arising from the more favorable economic and fiscal situation to the masses by bringing more food on the table and creating new job opportunities.

"We are trying our best to try to accelerate the manifestation of these benefits while maintaining fiscal discipline," Teves said. "We don't really have to be entirely dependent on the government. If we could encourage private investment, it would really be helpful," Teves said.

"We agreed we'll be more transparent to our ODA partners on how much we really need, how much counterpart funding the government can provide and what we need from investors," he said.

Unlike early last year when many multilateral and bilateral lenders were hesitant to commit large scale program loans to the country, World Bank country director and PDF co-chair Joachim von Amberg said the international donor community had taken a more optimistic view this year.

"For instance, World Bank is considering making the use again of development policy lending which it has not used in the Philippines for seven years years. This is in a sense a seal of economic good housekeeping that the Bank provides based on the assessment that the (government) plans laid out to us in the last couple of days are convincing," Amsberg said.

He said the donors also agreed on a "much deeper" level of coordination and an immediate increase of resources for conflict-affected areas in Mindanao.

Transco posts 7.5% profit increase

By Abigail L. Ho

STATE-OWNED NATIONAL TRANSMISsion Corp. (Transco) registered a 7.5-percent increase in net income in 2005 to P16.2 billion from P15.07 billion in 2004.

Transco president and chief executive Alan Ortiz said this was around P1.4 billion higher than the state firm's forecast.

He attributed last year's profit growth to increased demand, better efficiencies and lower operating expenses.

The stronger peso likewise helped boost Transco's profit, he said.

For this year, he said Transco was gunning for "more or less the same" profit level.

In 2004, Transco saw its net income slip 2.1 percent to P15.07 billion from P15.39 billion in 2003, despite an increase in demand and higher net utility revenue.

Despite the decline that year, Transco's 2004 net income was still 11.5 percent higher than the projected profit of P13.51 billion.

While undertaking various projects to beef up its operations and improve power delivery to different parts of the country, Transco is also preparing for its impending privatization.

Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) has proposed that instead of giving the prospective concessionaire full control of the nationwide transmission grid, Transco should retain a 15-percent equity in it.

According to PSALM, a 15-percent stake in the transmission network would enable the government, through Transco, to keep a share of the business."

"The newly proposed scheme would also maximize the possibility of the privatization's success while protecting the government's interest," PSALM said.

The revised proposal was drafted in response to concerns raised by investors on technical pre-qualification.

Based on the original bidding terms, Transco's privatization would be done in two phases.

For the pre-franchise phase, the concessionaire will perform only functions that can be delegated. In the second phase, which already involves a franchise, the concessionaire will perform all functions related to the operation and management of the nationwide transmission grid.

The bidding for the 25-year Transco concession is expected to be held upon the issuance by the Energy Regulatory Commission of its final determination of the state firm's maximum allowable revenue (MAR).

PSALM earlier said that with the issuance of Transco's MAR, bidders would be in a better position to make a projection on their prospective revenue streams.

Enabling potential investors to make more accurate forecasts would help them prepare their bids, PSALM said.

Graft charges vs two SSS officials

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THERE WAS AN INTERESTING item in the papers last week on the SSS. No less than Corazon de la Paz, president and chief executive officer, and Aurora Ortega, vice president for the National Capital Region, are facing graft charges at the Office of the Ombudsman.

The president of the United Social Security System Members, Inc. (USSSMI), a retiree's group, claims the two officials have been illegally receiving SSS pensions while still employed.

By law, all private sector employees are compelled to become members of the SSS. In fact, this compulsory membership extends to self-employed professionals, single proprietors, actors and actresses, professional athletes, and so forth.

When an employee is retired at age 60, he can file for voluntary pension. If he is re-employed before reaching 65, his pension is suspended until he reaches 65, at which point his compulsory lifetime pension starts and he is allowed to continue working if he wants.

But, SSS is a government corporation. All its employees are classified as government employees. As such, they are compulsorily covered, not by SSS, but by GSIS.

When a person transfers his employment from a private company to SSS, his SSS coverage stops and his GSIS membership begins. However, he can continue his SSS membership by voluntarily paying the employee's and employer's shares in the monthly contribution.

When he reaches 60 and has paid at least 120 monthly contributions, he can file for retirement. His continued employment at SSS is immaterial because he remains a government employee, not a private sector employee.

Both De la Paz and Ortega were working in the private sector—and were SSS members by compulsion—before they were employed at SSS. They chose to continue their SSS memberships by paying the employee's and the employer's shares in their monthly contributions. As such, they are classified as voluntary SSS members.

When they reached the age of 60, and they had paid at least 120 monthly contributions, they filed for pensions. Their continued employment at SSS as government employees has absolutely no bearing on their SSS pension.

If they had retired from SSS at age 60 and later found employment with a private company before reaching 65, their SSS pension would have been suspended until age 65. From age 65 on, their compulsory lifetime pension would have started, and they could continue to work.

Their ongoing monthly pensions while continuing to work as SSS employees are entirely within the SSS charter and the rules of the SSS Commission.

Why do I know all of these rules? Because, I am a founding director and immediate past president of the Philippine Association of Retired Persons (PARP), the largest and the only nationwide retirees group in the country and the most relentless watchdog over SSS.

My suggestion to USSSMI is to withdraw their complaint. And then, they should profusely apologize—and in public—to two of the most God-fearing, law-abiding and hard-working ladies you will ever find in the government service.

ESA opens school in China

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

ENTREPRENEURS SCHOOL OF ASIA IS opening its second business school in Hanghou, Zhejiang province in China, considered this country's tourism capital.

ESA managing director and co-founder Jaime Noel Santos said the school had signed a partnership agreement with the Chinese government on the project.

The Chinese government developed the campus on a three-hectare property, while ESA will manage the school. The school is set to open on April 15.

Santos said the school in China was designed to accommodate 300 to 400 students.

ESA will offer courses in business Mandarin and other courses that will teach students ways of doing business in China.

Santos said ESA was the first school in Asia that focused entirely on creating an entrepreneurial culture and setting an entrepreneurial mindset among its students.

Students of ESA in the Philippines will have the option to progress to a masters program offered by the school's partner universities in the United Kingdom, Australia and the US. Its partner institutions are the following : University of Portsmouth, Oxford Brookes University, Northumbria University, European Business School in the United Kingdom; Northwestern Polytechnic University in the US and Curtin University of Technology in Australia.

For college students, ESA offers degree programs such as BS Entrepreneurship and BS Business Administration.

ESA's first campus is in Libis, Quezon City. Established in 1999 as a British college, the school aspires to be a leader in entrepreneurship education, research and development in the region.

ESA is co-founded by its president Vivienne Tan, daughter of taipan Lucio Tan.

PDF, ODA . . .

From page B2

ble for all that?"

Brains for sale

Taking the cue, Ambassador Hong Jong-ki of Korea had his own economist joke to share: A tourist visiting a South Pacific island chances upon a lady selling brains. On display was a nuclear physicist's brain for $12 a gram, a concert pianist's brain for $15 a gram, and a politician's brain selling, understandably, at a bargain $1 a gram.

But what caught his attention was the economist's brain, selling for a hefty $50 a gram. Curious, he asks the vendor why. Surprised at the question, the lady retorts, "Why, didn't you know how hard it is to get even a gram of a brain from an economist?"

I guess that's supposed to explain why it doesn't take too many economists to create chaos. And more so if you have an economist for a President. (Or a columnist, for that matter!)

(In case you'd welcome being among more chaotic economists, I will be sharing the same stage again with Congressman Salceda, along with Philexport's Sergio Ortiz-Luis, in the Philippine Economic Society Forum "A Strong Peso: Boon or Bane?" at 2 p.m. on Wednesday at the Li Seng Giap Auditorium of the University of Asia and the Pacific in Pasig City. The forum is open to the public.)

(More economist jokes welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu.)

Historical bicycle tour celebrates 'rise' of Bataan

THE LAKBYKE MABUHAY TOUR 2006 slated for April 6 to 8 is an educational-cultural bike tour that will retrace in reverse the grueling Death March by Pilipino World War II veterans and heroes and the valiant defense of the Philippine nation against a superior enemy.

This event seeks to achieve a "consciousness reversal" in society's observance of historical events. Instead of focusing on "defeats" such as the Fall of Bataan, the event focuses our historical perspective on the uplifting values of solidarity and collective self-reliance manifested by "Galing Pilipino" heroes.

To commemorate this momentous event, the LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour will retrace the Death March in reverse, and on bikes, starting from Capas, Tarlac, leading to San Fernando, Pampanga to Mariveles, Bataan and finally ending in Balanga, Bataan. In total, the LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour will travel over 130 kilometers of history.

The schedules of the three-day bike tour are: On April 6 (provincial-based bikers), a tour of historical shrines around Tarlac; on April 7 (for provincial-based bikers), retracing the route World War II prisoners took from Capas, Tarlac to San Fernando, Pampanga; on April 8 (for Metro Manila and provincial-based bikers), retracing the Death March route from the San Fernando, Pampanga old train station to Km 0 at Mariveles, Bataan, and ending in Balanga, Bataan.

During the event, activities at each stop will enhance the tour experience. On April 6 in Capas, Tarlac, a "Galing Panimula sa Capas", the "Galing Leadership Forum", "Galing Parangal Para sa mga Bayani", and a "Mabuhay Concert" greets bikers and other participants of the Tour. On April 7, during the run from Capas to San Fernando, there will be a symbolic "Galing Salubong", "Galing Kalinangan Pagtitipon", and a "Mabuhay Concert." Finally, on April 8, at designated routes at Guagua, Layac, Hermosa, Orani, Balanga, Pilar, Mariveles and at the Bataan Capitol will be held culminating events such as "Ambag-Pagkain", "Galing Leadership Forum", "Paggunita Tour", and "Parangal sa Beterano". The Tour will be capped with a grand fireworks display and the Galing Pilipino Mabuhay Concert at the Bataan Capitol.

Interested participants are encouraged to call and register their names with the Galing Pilipino Movement at 631-3932 or 633-1089, or e-mail galling_pilipino@yahoo.com on or before April 4 to secure limited bus seats.

The Galing Pilipino Movement is a non-profit, non-political, non-sectarian private sector initiative that recognizes, affirms and propagates what is good and galing (excellent) about being Pilipino, about Pilipinos and about the Philippines as a counterforce to the negativism and cynicism that erodes our sense of nationalism and collective worth. GPM wants to make galing the brand mark of this generation of Pilipinos. GPM holds offices at Suite 252 Cityland Tower Condominium, Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City.

The LakBYKE Mabuhay Tour 2006 is supported by Chowking, Sun Life Financial, Cosmos Bottling Corp, Rapp Collins, Procter & Gamble Philippines, www.yehey.com, DDB cares, San Miguel Purefoods, Magnolia, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and the Manila Broadcasting Company. Cycad (Cycling Advocates) has provided technical and logistical assistance to the Tour.

Mazda6 2.3L wins Car of the Year

AT AN AWARDS CEREMONY LAST Thursday, the Mazda6 2.3-liter four-door passenger sedan bested 10 other best-in-class winners to bag the Car of the Year-Philippines (Coty-P) trophy for 2005.

The Mazda6 2.3L qualified for the top award by winning the Executive Sedan of the Year title. The other best-in-class winners that were finalists for the Coty-P trophy were: the Hyundai Getz, Subcompact of the Year; Mitsubishi Lancer 1.8 MX Limited, Compact Car of the Year; BMW 530i, Luxury Sedan of the Year; Chrysler 300C, Ultra-Luxury Sedan of the Year, Mazda Tribute 3.0 V6, Entry-Level SUV of the Year; Volvo XC70, Luxury SUV of the Year; Mercedes-Benz ML 350, Ultra-Luxury SUV of the Year; Toyota Innova 2.5G, Entry-Level Multipurpose Vehicle (MPV) of the Year; Mitsubishi Grandis, Luxury MPV of the Year and Ford Ranger XLT, Pickup Truck of the Year.

Special Awards went to the Toyota Innova, Best Value for Money; BMW X3 2.0 diesel, Best in Technical Innovation; Audi A6, Best in Design; and Mercedes-Benz S350, Best Safety Package.

The Coty-P Awards Night at Rockwell Tent, Makati was the second held by the Car Awards Group Inc, (Cagi), an independent, non-stock, non-profit association of 40 motoring journalists from more than two dozen print, broadcast and online media outfits.

Cagi conducted quantitative and qualitative tests on 54 production vehicles that were on sale in 2005. The tests were done over six weekends in the last two months at a closed-off area in Forest Hills Country Club, Antipolo and the results were tallied and audited by accounting firm Sycip Gorres Velayo & Co.

Malabon civic groups launch 25th Gintong Parangal search

PRESTIGIOUS CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS in Malabon City, led by the Rotary Club of Malabon, yesterday launched the search for the 25th Gintong Parangal awardees to honor the city's outstanding citizens.

Rotary Club of Malabon president Mario Limchu said the steering committee, composed of the presidents of the six participating civic groups, has met to launch the annual search, which marks its silver anniversary this year, to give due recognition to Malabon residents who have brought honor and prestige to the historic town or contributed to its development and progress.

Limchu, who is also overall chair of Gintong Parangal 2006, identified the six civic organizations as the Rotary Club of Malabon, The Malabon's Lion's Club, The Malabon Jaycees Senator, Soroptomist International of Malabon, Malabon Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Greater Malabon Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Limchu explained the six civic groups are part of the non-profit, non-government Kalipunan ng mga Samahan ng Malabon (Kasama) which was organized not only to conduct the annual search but also to develop and promote a common bond among the different sectors in the city representing business, socio-civic, religious, professionals, sports, academic and government sectors.

"Our objective is to carry out undertakings that will promote the welfare of Malabon residents through humanitarian, social and economic endeavors for the less privileged, especially the out-of-school youth," Kasama president Maynardo R. Espiritu said.

Espiritu, who is also a former mayor of Malabon, said the 25th awards night will be held on May 20 this year at the Pescadores Restaurant for the following citations: Dangal ng Malabon award for the city's Most Outstanding Citizen; Gawad ng Katangian for the Outstanding Citizen in the Field of Endeavor; Gawad ng Pagkilala for the Top 10 Passers of the Bar and different Board Examinations, Graduates of Masteral and Doctoral Courses and College Graduates who passed with Honor.

He stressed the awardees will be chosen "through a rigorous process" to be conducted by the nomination and screening committee composed of Kasama past presidents and officers. This year's nomination and screening committee is headed by Jarvis Chua.

Limchu identified the other members of the 2006 Steering Committee as follows:

Linda T. Sanchez, (president-Soroptomist International of Malabon), Ramon C. Villanueva Jr (president-Malabon Lions Club), James Yu (president-Malabon Chamber of Commerce and Industry), Jojo Flores (president-Greater Malabon Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and Anthony Vidal (president-Malabon Jaycees senator).

He said formal nominations for each category of the 25th Gintong Parangal Awards may be sent to the Kasama secretariat at the Rotary Club of Malabon Center, 74 Gov. Pascual Avenue, Potrero, Malabon, with telephone numbers 361-3443.

Bits & Clips

National summer camp for HS students

THE PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF YOUTH Science Clubs Inc (PSYSC), in cooperation with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), invites all high school students from Batanes to Jolo, both from public and private schools, to join its 35th National Summer Camp from April 5 to 9 at the Mergrande Ocean Resort, Davao City. With the theme, "Physics Engaged! Flow. Transform. Ignite!", explore the world of Physics through lectures, fun-filled workshops and an educational trip. For more information, call 920-8174 or 920-9561 and look for Linda Aber or e-mail pisoysl@gmail.com. Log on to www.psysc.org.

Book cover design contest launch

ADB INVITES TALENTED STUDENT artists who are bona fide college students in Metro Manila to submit entries to a cover design competition of its flagship statistics publication "Key Indicators of Developing Asian and Pacific Countries". Prizes at stake are P50,000 (1st), P40,000 (2nd), and P30,000 (3rd). There will be seven consolation prizes of P5,000 each. Each of the major winners will be awarded a trophy. Their school/university will also receive a P25,000 cash prize and a trophy. All participating artists will receive a Certificate of Appreciation from ADB. The KI features a special thematic chapter and is produced annually by the ADB's economics and research department. Deadline for submission of entries is on April 5. Contest rules, including application form, may be downloaded from http://www.adb.org/Statistics.

Sports marketing seminars

A SERIES OF SEMINARS ON "strategic Brand Management Through Sports Marketing" will be launched by the Institute of Sports Marketing with the first module on April 5 from 1 to 6 p.m. at the Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati. The specific topics and the speakers are "Building Brands Through Sports Marketing" by Agapito Alcantara Jr, vice president/marketing, Asia Brewery Inc; "Maximizing Brand Exposure Through Sponsorship of Sporting Events," by Grace Venzuela, president, Braveworld Event & Creative Services; and "The Convergence of Marketing & Public Relations in Sports Marketing Management" by Dr. Lucas E. Santiago, president, Interlink Public Relations Inc. "The sponsorship of games by private companies provides a lot of marketing opportunities for brand/product build-up as seen in the last Southeast Asian Games," says Rene Esguerra, director of the Institute of Sports Marketing and pioneer sports marketing professor at DLSU-Manila as approved by CHED. "That's why brand managers should not miss this seminar series," he adds. For details, call 742-9223.

GLOBE'S ODE TO LIGHT BAGS ANVIL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Globe Telecom's Ode to Light 2005 Calendar received the Anvil Award of Excellence in the Public Relations Society of the Philippines' (PRSP) 41st Anvil Awards. Globe was cited 'for successfully producing a calendar that is reflective of the company's corporate image, and at the same time celebrates the timeless, yet evolving nature of communications, the basic service provided by the company.' The photography in the calendar was provided by Don Jaime Zobel de Ayala, former chair of Globe Telecom. At the awarding ceremony were (from left) PRSP president Milen C. De Quiros, Globe public relations head Jones T. Campos, Globe senior vice president Rodolfo A. Salalima, designer Bryan Tenorio and Anvil Awards chair of the board of jurors Justice Amado D. Valdez.

PIZZA HUT CHALLENGE MOTORCADE

Pizza Hut is once again changing the face of delivery service in the country with its new challenge—'Hot and on-time guaranteed or your next pizza is free'. In line with this new challenge, the country's 'Pinaka-Pizza' introduces the Oven Pouch, a unique delivery container that locks and seals the goodness of the pizza as it comes out of the oven. The company also continues to enhance its delivery service through efficient handling of calls by its own call center and a total of 600 delivery riders ready to deliver pizza orders in a flash. In celebration of this bold move, Pizza Hut recently conducted a motorcade at Rizal Park graced by celebrity endorser Diether Ocampo (shown) together with over a hundred motorbikes and vintage cars joining the parade, as well as other special guests.

SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT SEALED

Pacific Paints (Boysen) Philippines Inc signs an agreement with the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) as the major sponsor of the 32nd UAP National Convention to be held from April 27 to 29 at the World Trade Center. Seated (from left) are Albert S. Yu, UAP executive director for conventions and conferences; Ruben Cueto, marketing manager, Boysen Paints; Edric Marco C. Florentino, UAP national president; and Ka Kuen Chua, convention director. Standing (from left) are Yolanda D. Reyes, chair, Arcasia; Eric Cuisia, Boysen Paints; Fernando L. Santos, member, PRC Board of Architecture; Christopher L. Ong; Bobby Chua, Boysen Paints; Eugene G. Gan, chair, PRC Board of Architecture; and Godofredo Q. Queri, UAP executive director for professional practice.

CENTRALBOOKS OPENS AT GLORIETTA 3

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Undersecretary for Industry and Investments Group Elmer C. Hernandez (3rd from right) together with National Books Development Board (NBDB) chair Dennis Gonzalez (4th from left) led guests recently at the formal opening of Centralbooks at the 2nd Floor of Glorietta 3 (front of Goodwill Bookstore) Ayala Center, Makati. In addition to law books, the newest branch boasts the latest innovations in the publishing industry, the Publish on Demand and the Picture Books. The former offers the latest state-of-the-art technology in book printing where digital files could now be printed to a complete, professional perfect-bound book in a matter of minutes regardless of number of copies, the first of its kind in the country, while the latter prints digital photos from CDs, memory card or even from bluetooth-enabled camera cell phones to either soft-or hard-bound books. Centralbooks president/CEO lawyer Jose Agaton R. Sibal (2nd from left) led the company's officers in welcoming the guests together with Jose Paolo Sibal, (2nd from right) vice-president for finance/administration and Juan Carlos Sibal, (3rd from left) vice-president for operations. Also shown are Bing Sibal-Limjoco (left) and Penny Sibal-Balbin (right), Phoenix Publishing vice-president and executive vice-president, respectively.

Pearl whitens, promotes new skin growth

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KAI Pearl Whitening Soap, a face and body whitener and dermatologically tested, available in 90 and 135 grams, is a product of Erthline Inc. For more inquiries, call 721-3724 or 721-2008. KAI Pearl Whitening Soap is available at leading supermarkets, drugstores and beauty shops nationwide.

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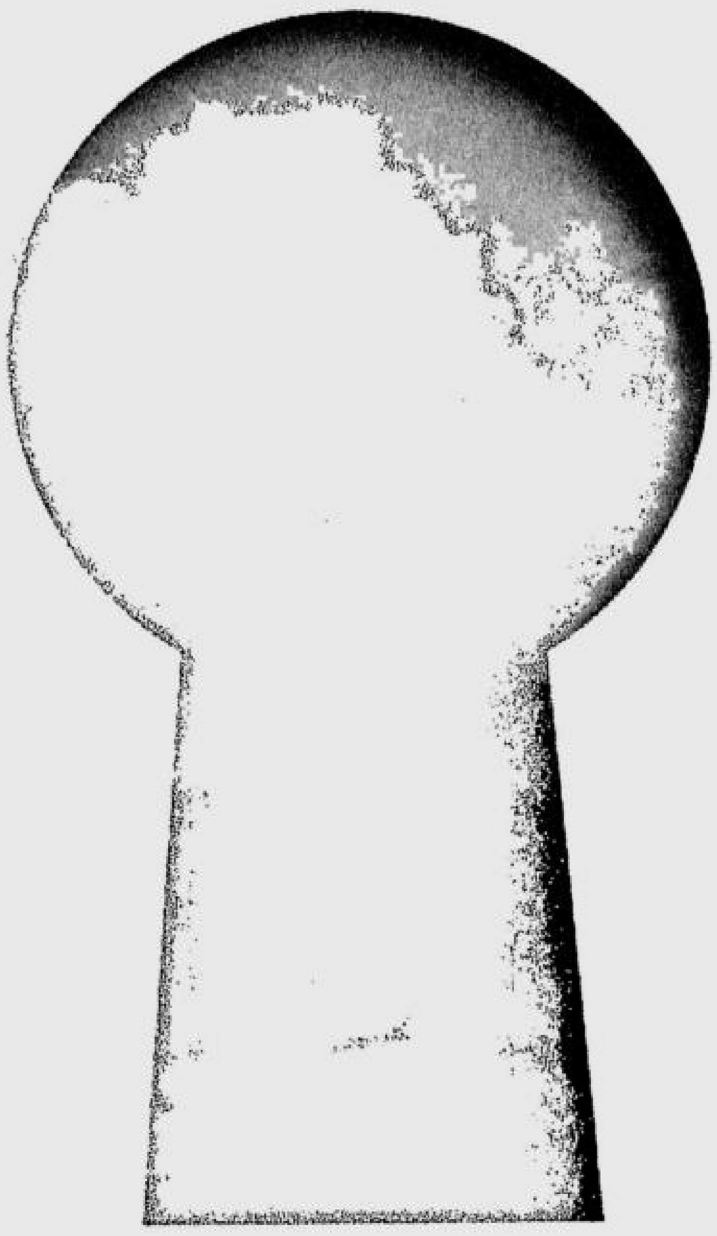

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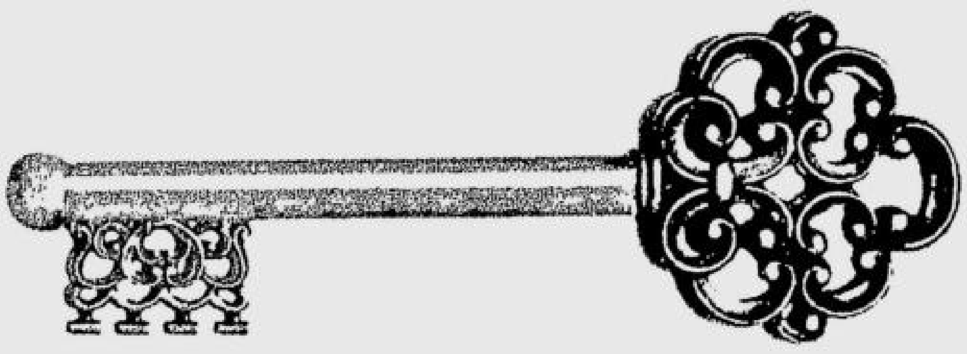

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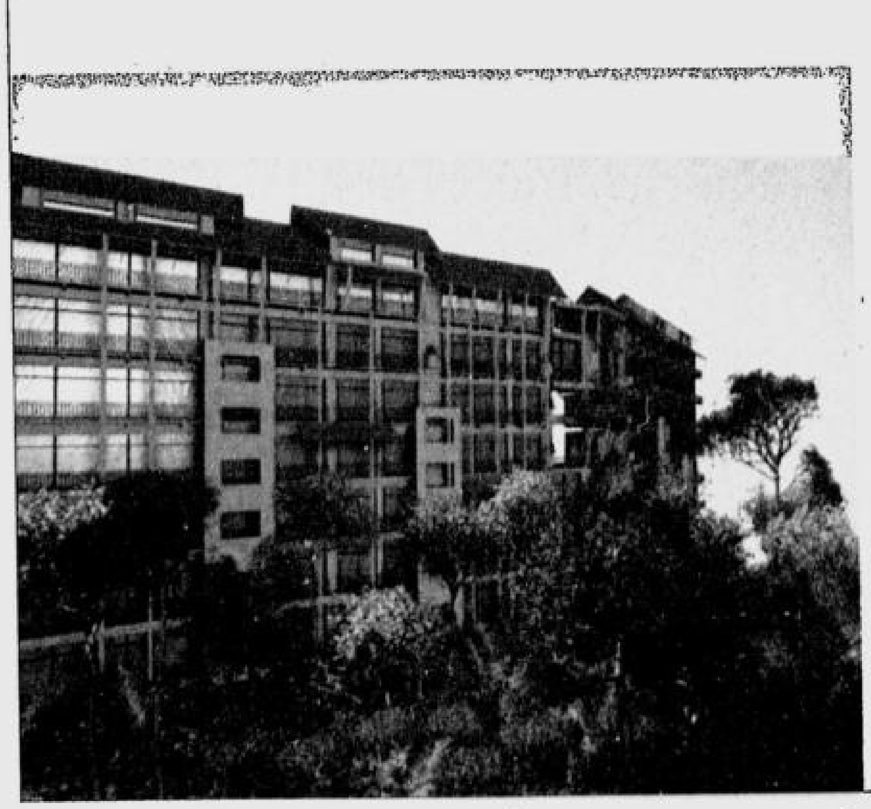

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'I'm no traditional entrepreneur, that's my dad'

Lance Gokongwei bags entrepreneur award, but says why he's not your picture of one

RUDY ESPERAS

LANCE Gokongwei says he's another kind of entrepreneur, one who grabs opportunities and takes risks

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

LANCE Y. GOKONGWEI WAS JUST 30 years old when his father, John, one of the richest men in the Philippines, told him he just bought four planes.

"*Bahala ka na* (take care of it)," John told Lance.

That led to the birth of Cebu Air Inc. or Cebu Pacific in 1996.

Today, Cebu Pacific is the second largest airline in the country with a 37-percent market share of domestic routes. It serves 15 local cities and flies to Hong Kong and Inchon. It recently bought a new airplane and will increase its fleet to 12 by the end of the year.

The growth of the airline, which incurred a loss only twice in its 10-year history, earned for Lance the Entrepreneur of the Year Award of Ernst and Young, besting 20 other successful Filipino entrepreneurs, most of whom started their businesses from nothing.

He now joins the ranks of Ton Tan Caktiong; and National Bookstore dame Socorro Ramos - the past two years' winners.

Lance will compete this June for the World Entrepreneur of the Year awards, which Jollibee's Tony Tan Caktiong won two years ago.

Cebu Pacific's growth was propelled by directions set forth by Lance—focus on being a low-cost carrier and adopt unique marketing strategies used by other foreign successful LCCs.

He is the first to admit that he is not your traditional Filipino entrepreneur.

"I am not the traditional picture of entrepreneurship, which is someone who has no money, and who started his business from scratch," he says.

Lance was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth, as Dad John then owned a couple of businesses.

One of his most profitable firms was Universal Robina Corp., one of the largest manufacturers of snack foods in the country under the Jack n' Jill label.

Lance points out, however, that there is another way of defining an entrepreneur, usually more common in developed nations.

He is someone who grabs at opportunities around him, takes risks, avails himself of available resources and creates something big.

"It's about seeking out opportunities, taking risks. Developing nations have better capital markets and these provide sources of funding for ideas," Lance states.

But he says most Filipinos have this picture of traditional entrepreneurs, such as his dad.

John, although born to a wealthy Chinese-Filipino family lost his father early. He then had to fend for his mother and siblings, riding a bike for miles and crossing rivers just to sell goods to earn a living.

"That is my dad's story," says Lance.

But just because he did not have to start from nothing should not be taken against Lance who still had the responsibility of growing the conglomerate handed him.

And so far, the elder Gokongwei has no reason to believe that he did wrong when he handed to his only son one of the biggest enterprises in the Philippines.

Lance laughingly describes himself as the Stepford Wife, because his mind has always been focused on becoming the perfect manager for the family business—his only ambition as far as he could remember.

And he did as soon as he can, arming himself with unquestionable qualifications. He finished BS (Applied Sciences) from the Pennsylvania Engineering School; and BS (Finance) from the Wharton School. He graduated summa cum laude both times.

Not knowing anything about the airline industry, Lance says he read a couple of books to give him a better idea about the business. He read Richard Branson's book, Losing My Virginity: How I've Survived, Had Fun, and Made a Fortune Doing Business My Way. And this somehow became a bible to him in the early years of Cebu Pacific.

Gokongwei's entry into the airline industry was prompted by the liberalization of several sectors during the administration of then President Fidel V. Ramos.

Lance recalls at that time that Ramos encouraged tapping into the foreign capital markets for funding.

This spurred several investors to go into major industries which Ramos, through Congress, liberalized—telecommunications, airlines, cement, energy, petrochemicals.

His family went into telecommunications, airlines and petrochemicals and started Cebu Pacific with P125 million.

Cebu Pacific revenues as of June 2005 was P4.02 billion, up from P3.94 billion in 2004.

Its earnings before income tax, depreciation and amortization for the first six months of 2005 dropped P359 million from the 2004 income of P772 million.

Lance attributes this to the steep rise in fuel prices. He says last year was only the second time in the 10-year history of the airline that Cebu Pacific registered a loss. The first was during its first year of operations.

The Cebu Pacific president says the company made a quick turn around because Cebu Pacific served an "unmet need in the market."

Its tickets sell at 40 percent lower than Philippine Airlines' rates.

There are many takers as he says the airline industry has been growing at over 20 percent a year.

He admits the biggest mistake he made in the airlines was to veer away from their focus as an LCC and introduced business class sections and other high-end rates.

"We have to focus on just one thing," he says.

But on top of offering Filipinos cheaper rates, Lance is also attempting to change people's habits.

By offering consumers cheaper rates if they book their tickets early, Cebu Pacific was able to change the habit of Pinoys who used to buy their tickets two days before they leave.

Asked if there was one thing he would change if given a chance to start Cebu Pacific all over again, he says he would have used different airplanes.

"We would not have started with DC-9s, but started with 737 or Airbuses," he says.

But then, it was dad John who bought the DC-9s.

Son Lance has since embarked on a refleeting program and recently purchased 12 Aibus A3192s and contracted to lease two Airbus A320s.

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Cha-cha: Do we really need it?

MAPping the Future

Augusto L. de Leon

SOME POINTS THAT EMERGED from a recent forum at the University of the Philippines help to form a more educated opinion on the proposed charter change.

First, there is a convincing argument that the present constitution needs some changes.

Second, such constitutional proposals do include some very radical irreversible changes, which could be counterproductive to the future of our country. The two are basically the proposals for a change to a parliamentary system and the federalization of the government structure. Third, the less controversial and most likely critical changes may also be attained by following the process the United States instituted to correct the infirmities of their constitution.

The United States merely amends some provisions, instead of changing the entire constitution.

One should look at the various merits and aspects of the proposed reforms.

Electoral reforms

The first of these proposals that deserve support are those involving electoral reforms.

These can have the biggest impact and are applicable to both parliamentary and presidential forms of government.

Instead of changing the whole constitution, we can simply embed the proposals of electoral reforms by amending it.

The next proposals deserving support are those regarding judicial reforms.

These are no-loss, all-gain changes.

The proposals regarding opening of land ownership and the use of natural resources to foreign investors will surely require a lot more education.

Economic development based on the productive employment of our growing population will certainly require foreign investments.

As a country, we have already exhausted our foreign and domestic credit resources to fund investments that will generate employment.

On this ground, we will have to deal with the fear of the nationalists.

While most of them are passionately emotional about their beliefs, they are fortunately educated enough to rationally accept arguments allowing foreign investments, provided the proper safeguards are in place.

For example, nationalists fear that income coming from foreign investments will be moved out of the country by foreigners.

While possible, this is not realistically any different from Filipino investors, or even politicians and government officials who also bring their wealth to other countries.

Worrisome provisions

The most worrisome provisions of the proposed constitutional change are the changes in the form and structure of government itself.

Touted as the solution to poverty and corruption, with the rationale that such a radical change in government will force a change in the leaders and bureaucrats, ordinary people may not realize the full impact of such a change.

The parliamentary system has indeed worked well in countries with more mature democracies. Its growing pains were somehow mitigated by other factors, such as the tradition of a monarchial rule, as in the case of England, or a young democracy, in the case of Thailand.

We do not have this tradition behind us, and we have no assurance that the proposed parliament will function any better.

In such a system, to move forward may only be possible by means of personal trade-offs and allocation of 'goodies' among members of parliament instead of the national good.

Furthermore, the negative practices of the present Congress may actually be exacerbated by the merging of legislative and the executive powers.

Even in public corporate governance, the principle of 'check and balance' is widely accepted as necessary to good governance. What are now bruited as examples of obstruction of the Senate and misuse of its investigative powers may be attributed more to the fact that there are indeed good reasons to expose excesses to the public, and that will only be possible if those that speak out have immunity that private citizens do not have.

Promoters of the parliamentary form of government would do well to study carefully the history of Thailand and the role the King has played to make it work. Statistics of corruption among countries with presidential and parliamentary forms of government have to be viewed with care when drawing conclusions.

Other factors such as the quality and honesty of the leadership might be a greater determinant than the form of government.

On the other hand, how many parliamentary governments of developing countries have experienced frequent turnovers, undermining stability and predictability of policies? How many have succumbed to adopting socialistic policies that their economies are unable to sustain? The example of England at the time of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is a rare instance.

She was able to eliminate the burden of government, a move that has saved the economy of England.

Nowadays, France is similarly faced with the divisive effects of easing the burden of socialistic policies in order to improve the global competitiveness of the country.

The fear that federalism can in fact fragment our country is very real in the context of our high propensity to be regional in our relationships as citizen.

We tend to view ourselves as Ilocano first before being a Filipino, Cebuano first before being a fellow Filipino, and so on.

We have not developed an economic interdependence that assures economic self-interest in keeping a nation operating as a whole.

We do not have the history of the Federal States in Germany, each economically self-sufficient even before the Federal States was formed.

The same with Malaysia, each ruled by a Datu or King before forming itself into a Federated state.

Goverment expenses

There are good reasons to believe that if we adopt the federal structure of government, the first impact will be on government expenditures.

Each region will demand building a capitol as seat of the regional government.

Each region will increase its political and government employees to mimic the organization of the present national government.

Who will pay the bill?

It is envisioned that by setting up a separate regional government, each region will develop its own culture, including the inclusion of the local dialect, compared to the Filipino and English we are now promoting.

As it is, we now reap the results of our having abandoned English in favor of Filipino with the emergence of Taglish as a popular semi-language.

It is retrogressive compared to the moves of countries like China, Korea, and Vietnam, which all have long histories of education and literature in their native language and now have to catch up with the global means of communication, which is English.

Europe is moving to consolidate itself by means of the European Union. Why are we moving in the opposite direction by trying to segment ourselves?

We can already predict the probable outcome by looking at how the present local officials make use of the local government laws.

Expected effects

The practical effects of local government laws give us a clue to what federalization would mean for us.

For example, it used to be that companies doing national business needed to secure one permit to operate within the country. Large companies send trucks to sell to sari-sari stores in the provinces.

Then, local governments set their own laws requiring a permit for each sales vehicle operating in their territory.

The large number of permits no longer makes it feasible to distribute consumer goods directly to the sari-sari stores.

Manufacturers are forced to work with distributors to market their products, and sari-sari stores are forced to go to Metro Manila to buy the goods they sell. Consequently, the smaller stores that cannot afford the cost of picking up their goods from Metro Manila or Metro Cebu are effectively marginalized.

It would seem that what is needed is to legislate laws that will mandate the national government to provide more resources to the local government instead of giving the local government more power to impose different forms of taxation and regulations.

In the political front, federalization will likely promote and entrench the warlords in each region.

The private armies of politicians would then be clothed with police powers and made legitimate and legal.

Collaboration between syndicates and the regional law enforcements can create 'untouchables' in each region.

Even in the United States, the federal government has to intervene in order to break up local or state deviations from the basic laws of the land.

Changing to a federal form of government is a move down a one-way street.

If we adopt it in this decade, it will create a constituency of its own that will resist change.

The experience of China makes a good example.

When regions were given autonomy, the regional governments gained more control of resources and the wealthier regions gained the power to hold on to the resources for the exclusive use of their region.

While the other regions also had the same power, they could only hold on to the meager resources in their region.

The national government, in turn, has become powerless to redistribute wealth to the poorer regions, in spite of the double-digit growth rate of China as a country.

Necessary changes

Change is necessary. However, our current economic growth rate, even at its best, cannot duplicate the China experience. Therefore, it greatly limits our capacity to cope with the transition to a federal or parliamentary structure of government.

Let us focus on the areas that need to be changed, such as reforming the electoral system and providing more autonomy to the judicial branch of government, without collapsing the entire structure.

(This article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is Principal Consultant of De Leon Consulting. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

Amparo Policarpio
Managing Director
First Philippine Scales, Inc.
as LADY GRAVITY

Industry: Manufacturing
Business Challenge: Implementing powerful operations and distribution processes to help sustain market leadership
Secret Weapon: Microsoft Dynamics for Distribution
Sidekick: Global Implementation Services, Inc.

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Rene Sio
President & General Manager
Sanitary Care Products Asia
as CLEANSWEEP

Industry: Tissue paper converting
Business Challenge: Accurately forecast sales in order to source raw materials on time and in the right quantity
Secret Weapon: Microsoft Dynamics for Distribution
Sidekick: Seven Rivers, Inc.

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Partially paid stocks

Corporate Securities Info
Raul Palabrica

WHEN A PERSON OFFERS TO SUBSCRIBE TO shares of stocks of a corporation, he is expected to pay for them on the agreed payment date.

He should not wait for the corporation to make a formal call for payment or to threaten to have his subscription declared delinquent if he fails to come up with the money.

A delinquency sale is not only an expensive affair; it can be very damaging to the credit reputation of the affected person.

By the same token, upon receipt of the investor's payment, the corporation is obliged to record the sale in the Stock and Transfer Book and issue the corresponding stock certificate to him.

Depending on the number of shares it represents, the stock certificate constitutes proof of the stockholder's ownership of a portion of the corporation's assets and liabilities.

It's good if the investor has the right amount of money at the time the obligation to pay for the stock falls due. The preparation and delivery of his stock certificate will be easy.

But sometimes, unforeseen events make it difficult for an investor to meet this financial commitment to the corporation.

Court ruling

What happens if the investor does not have sufficient funds at the appointed date to be able to pay in full the value of the stocks he promised to purchase?

How will his payment be applied? To the full payment of the shares that his money can cover? Or will it be applied proportionally to the subscribed shares?

And if pro-rata application is made, can stock certificates be issued for the partially paid stocks?

These questions were raised in a recent letter-query to the Securities and Exchange Commission by a company that accepted partial payment for subscriptions from subscribers who looked forward to receiving, in return, the corresponding stock certificates.

The points raised in the letter are not really new. Some years back, the treatment of payments received for stock subscriptions was passed upon by the Supreme Court.

In that case, the tribunal ruled that in the absence of a contrary provision in its by-laws, a corporation may apply payments made by subscribers-stockholders either—

- As full payment for the corresponding number of stocks that the par value of each of which is covered by such payment; or
- As payment pro rata to each and all the entire subscribed number of shares.

Application

At the time the decision was rendered, the law then in force states that stock certificates shall be issued only upon full payment of the value of the subscribed stocks.

On the basis of this ruling, a subscriber who fails to pay the full amount of his subscription is deemed to have conceded to the corporation the power to determine how his payment shall be applied.

With only its by-laws or internal policies to guide it, the corporation can either assign the whole amount to cover in full a certain number of shares or proportionally spread out the payment to the entire subscription.

So, if the corporation opts to go through the "full payment" mode, the stock certificates the stockholder can ask for will be equivalent only to the shares that are considered paid in full.

On the other hand, if the corporation does a pro rata application, the stockholder is not entitled to any stock certificate because the shares are not yet fully paid.

Prevailing rule

The tribunal's ruling was subtly set aside by our lawmakers when they made it clear in Section 64 of the Corporation Code that no certificate of stock shall be issued to a subscriber until the full amount of his subscription together with interest and expenses (in case of delinquent shares), if any is due, has been paid.

A lawmaker explained the rationale behind this provision along these lines: "To permit the issuance of certificates of stock for a payment of a subscription that does not cover the entire value of the shares subscribed is in effect permitting payment for the subscriptions in ways different from what the subscription agreement says or what the Corporation Code provides."

Thus, in reply to the query on incomplete payment of subscriptions, the SEC stated that partial payments shall be deemed applied proportionally among the number of shares subscribed.

It emphasized that to permit the issuance of stock certificates for payment of a subscription that does not cover the entire number and value of the shares subscribed would constitute a violation of the law. *(For feedback, please write to rpalabrica@inquirer. com. ph.)*

Extra degree means more pesos in pay

(Last of a series)

DAVAO CITY—AMID SPIRALING TUITION costs, more people are looking at education as an investment and a must, according to Jeralyn Adegue Palero, officer-in-charge of the preschool department of the Philippine Women's College (PWC) here.

Between a teacher who has a master's degree and one without, the big difference is their salary scale.

At the PWC, for instance, an entry level salary for an MA holder can be as high as P20,000 while those who are not MA holders will have to start at P7,500.

As the head of the preschool department who has spent years teaching here but who is still earning her MA units, her pay is between these two amounts. A doctorate degree holder can earn up to P45,000 a month, she says.

Prospects for advancement are dim for someone who's not working on a master's degree, she says. Palero herself is taking units for MA in Administration at the University of the Immaculate Concepcion (UIC) during summers.

Since the '90s, when tuition was deregulated in the country, education has become big business for private schools. For a down payment of P7,600, parents can enroll their toddlers at the Holy Child Academy Montessori learning system which accepts children as young as two and a half years old, according to Micmic Gare of the Holy Child cashier's office.

Monthly payment for learning system is slightly higher at P2,000 compared to the preschool department because of the work involved.

At five, the child enters preschool, where tuition costs P7,960 upon entrance and P1,911 a month. When the child reaches Grade 6, the entrance fee goes up to P13,800 which covers tuition and books but monthly payment is down at P1,250.

Most school cashiers are wary in answering queries about tuition rates as fees are expected to increase this coming school year.

Mounting calls from students against tuition fee increases also prompt some schools to adopt creative ways to attract enrollees.

"No tuition fee increase," a banner from the University of Mindanao (UM) during last year's enrollment season stated across Bolton street here. At the PWC, students from elementary and high school can enroll by paying only a down payment of P2,500. The balance will have to be paid on a monthly basis.

But at the Ateneo de Davao University (AdDU), high school tuition runs close to P50,000, said parent Edith Caduaya-Felizarta.

Private schools will start filing their application for tuition increases before the Department of Education (DepEd) in April this year. As long as they can convince DepEd that the increase in tuition fee will improve the quality of education, private schools are allowed to increase their tuition rate by as much as 30 percent under the deregulation law.

In college, some courses are becoming more lucrative that schools start offering them. Anticipating the demand for nursing diplomas in the coming years, AdDU opened its nursing department four years ago.

April Elbanbuena, an AdDU third year nursing student, says tuition runs close to P32,000 for this semester alone, a bit higher than the P27,000 a semester during her first year.

More students enroll in nursing now, says Frances Angeli Escudero, also a third year student. While there are around 400 of them in their batch, population in the lower years is increasing. This year, first year population may reach 700 students.

"Under the law, we have to spend two years working here before we can go abroad," says Paolo Solis, also a third year student.

Escudero says she is undecided yet whether to work abroad or not but some of her classmates are keen on leaving the country.

At least 10 to 15 percent of their class are professionals, mostly accountants and graduates of other business related courses, who are taking up nursing to work abroad.

Most of the doctors who enroll in nursing courses are in the Brokenshire College, which opened a special department for this purpose.

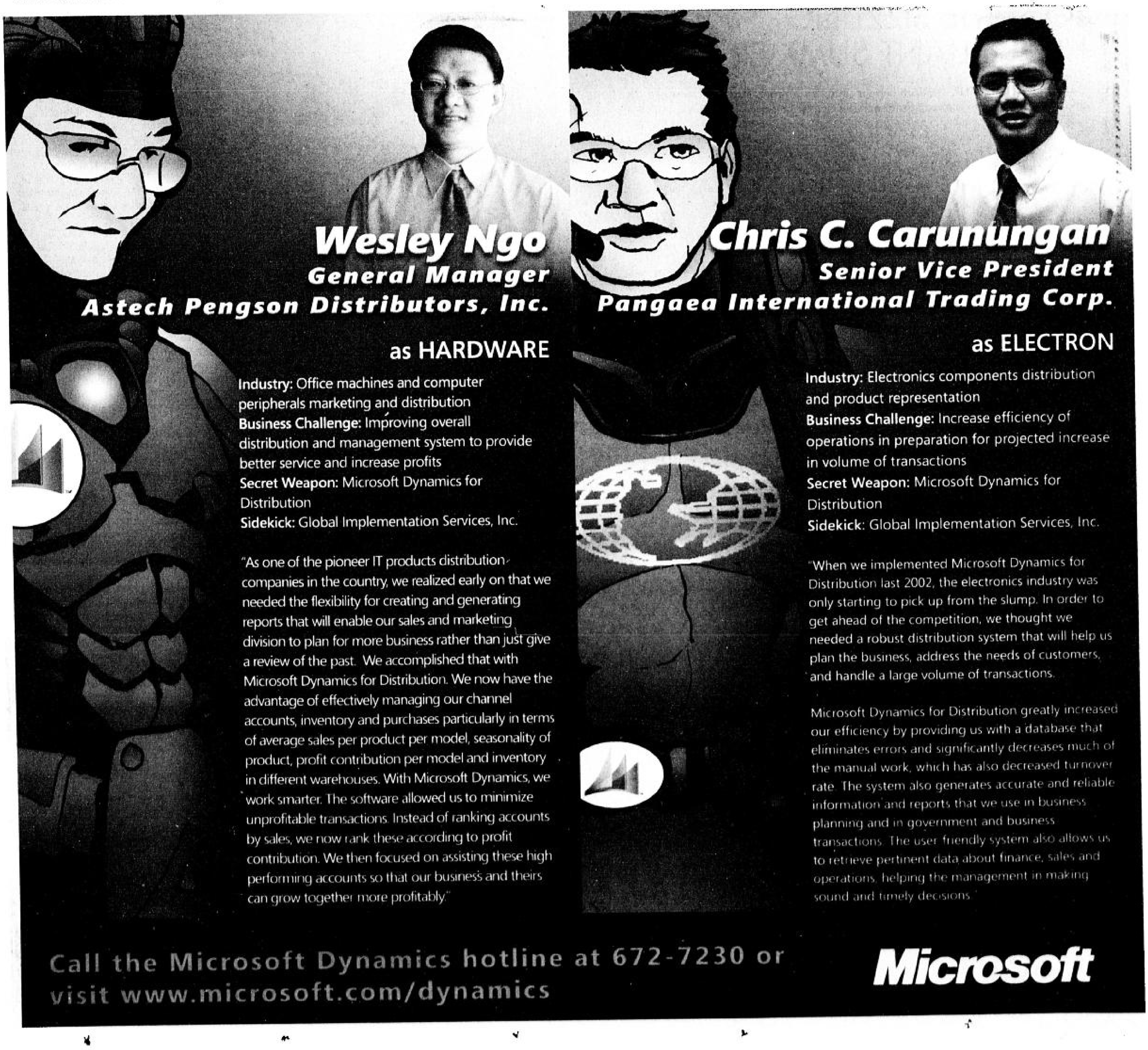
The review for the nursing board exams will cost the new nursing graduate an average of P10,000 and if she passes, she has to undergo hospital training afterwards.

High demand for new nursing graduates allows hospitals to demand payment from the new nurse trainees instead of the other way around.

At the Davao Medical Center (DMC), for instance, a nurse trainee has to pay P1,500 a month to train in the ward and P3,500 in other special areas like the emergency room, the delivery room, the operating room and the intensive care unit.

Since the full deregulation of tuition, some private schools are raking it in. Parents who can't afford the private schools are sending their children to public schools, where tuition is free and all they have to do is shell out some amount to patch a leaking roof in the classroom or pay for janitorial services.

But because of government's dwindling budget for education, some public elementary school are holding two classes in every classroom, making an average parent today think twice about sending their children there. *Germelina A. Lacorte, PDI Mindanao Bureau*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A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

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After months of work, the team is pushed into the shadows as he shoves his way to the stage for "his" prize. He's a glory hound. He benefits from the work of others and takes all the credit.

Grandstand George can cause more division within your team than any other person.

As George's leader, you need to teach him the benefits of working with a team and winning as a team.

Listen...

Talk to George one-on-one about his grandstanding. Give him examples of team efforts that he took credit for. Ask him who he respects within your organization and why.

Share your own positive team experiences with him.

...Then lead

1. Lead from power and strength. When you approach George, he needs to be aware of your strength. Lead him with authority. Otherwise, he will walk all over you. Let him know that you are not impressed by images, rather the teamwork that produces results.

2. Bring in a person he respects to help you. If George mentioned that he respected another leader in your organization, bring that person in to help mentor George.

3. Reward him for team play. Don't base George's salary or other rewards on his individual efforts. If he's a producer, he has already proven what he can do on his own. Base his rewards on meeting team goals.

4. Ask him to do projects. By giving George a project, you will be setting up boundaries for him. He needs boundaries. George needs to be put in a team environment where he will be forced to work with others, and win with others.

5. Know which issues are worth the battle. By meeting with George you will start to understand his personality and motivation. Pick your battles. It's better to have a driven person on your team who needs grooming than a polished one with no motivation. Discover what drives George and where he can develop as a leader. Find out what areas from which you should steer him clear.

Don't force him to work in an area where he has little interest or talent.

6. Once the issues are settled, never give in. Don't allow George to go outside the boundaries you have set up for him. He should not be able to go out on his own to do his own thing. He must learn how to work with a team in order to see the benefits of being rewarded as a team player.

Left unaddressed, George's grandstanding will affect your team's morale. As the leader, you need to emphasize the importance of the team to George. He is already motivated to win.

Give him the opportunity to win with a team, and he can become one of your strongest leaders.

For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please email us at maxwell@inspire.ph or call 813-2732/03 and ask for Gina. Text MAXWELL ON to 4632 (Smart) to get daily SMS leadership insights from John Maxwell. God bless!

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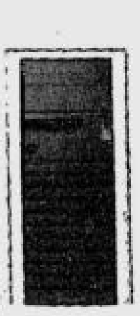

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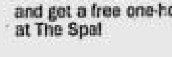

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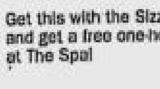

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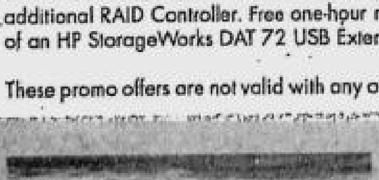

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MOVEMENTS

J&J has new Asean head

GRACE DEL ROSARIO-CASTAÑO WAS APPOINTED president of the Asean group of companies and the head of the Asean management board effective March 1.

Castaño becomes the second Filipino head of the regional organization responsible for the growing Johnson & Johnson sales and marketing team covering Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Castaño joined Johnson & Johnson in 1990 and later became the general manager of Johnson & Johnson Indonesia in 2000.

She assumed the position of president and managing director of Johnson & Johnson (Philippines) Inc. in 2002.

Zinnia S. Rivera was also named president and managing director of Johnson & Johnson (Philippines) Inc. effective March 1.

Significantly, Rivera becomes the 13th head of the local company since it was incorporated in the Philippines in 1956.

She is also the second Filipino to head the marketing-oriented company with a product portfolio which includes market leading brands Johnson's Baby Products, Modess Sanitary Napkins, Carefree Pantyshields and Wash and Neutrogena.

Rivera was the immediate vice president of the Johnson & Johnson regional research and development before this appointment.

Changes at Leo Burnett

LEO BURNETT announces the promotion of Raymond Arrastia to deputy managing director of Leo Burnett Manila and the appointment of former Leo Burnett Manila CEO Michael Constantine as chief executive/technical advisor for Leo Burnett and ARC.

The changes will see Arrastia—currently general manager of Blackpencil, Leo Burnett's second regional network—take over the helm from managing director March Ventosa, who leaves the agency after 20 years and accepts an appointment with ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.

In his new role as deputy managing director, Arrastia will focus on the agency's business development while retaining a concurrent role as head of Blackpencil.

Arrastia first joined Leo Burnett in 2001 as account management director. In 2003, he was tasked to set up the Philippine operations of Blackpencil, Leo Burnett's second regional network that focuses on building challenger brands to be successful.

In the Philippines, Blackpencil clients include Sun Cellular, Glaxo SmithKline and URC, among others.

Constantine has been connected with Leo Burnett for over 25 years, having worked across six markets including the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and Japan and establishing long term relationships with the agency's major multinational clients like Procter & Gamble, Philip Morris and Diageo.

He first moved to Manila in 1998 where he led an aggressive program of change to effectively transform then Hemisphere Leo Burnett into a full-fledged Leo Burnett agency.

Insular Life promotes execs

INSULAR LIFE chairman of the board and CEO Vicente R. Ayllon recently announced the promotion of three executives, Carmen Duque to senior assistant vice president and Sherlee L. Crisostomo and Jose A. Padilla to assistant vice president.

Duque heads the company's Systems Development Department, which develops, maintains, and enhances computerized business application systems and externally acquired systems. She obtained her Business Administration degree from the University of the Philippines (UP)-Diliman.

Crisostomo, the company's newest actuary, is with the actuarial research and product development staff which develops a competitive product portfolio for the company, as well as conducts research and analysis.

Padilla heads the customer servicing department which takes care of regular ordinary and direct marketing policy-related services including over-the-counter policy services, and telephone inquiries and requests.

New execs at Philamlife

JESUS G. Hofileña was recently appointed executive vice president for sales and marketing of Philamlife.

On top of his new responsibility, Hofileña will continue to concurrently head Philam Plans Inc. as president and CEO, and serve as president of Philam Foundation.

He will also continue with his responsibilities as chief marketing officer of the Philam Group of Companies.

Prior to his appointment, Hofileña was EVP and chief marketing officer of Philamlife where he has contributed significantly to the marketing as well as business development efforts of the company.

"Mommy! Want to get a Travel Bag, FREE? See page C-3
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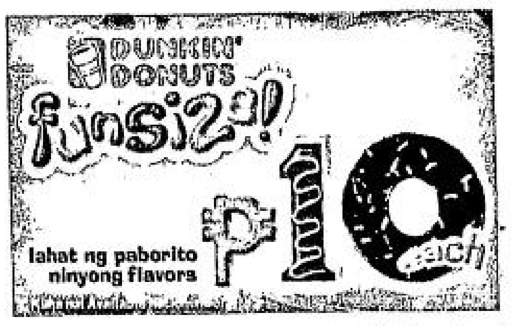
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'Winner!' on stage and CD

Cultural Center of the Philippines presents a Tanghalang Pilipino production
ZSAZSA ZATURNNAH
Ze Muzikal
Original Cast Recording 2006
Based on Carlo Vergara's Graphic Novel
Music, Lyrics & Musical Arrangement by Vincent A. DeJesus

'ZsaZsa Zaturnnah, Ze Muzikal's' original cast recording is a welcome documentation of a show that's both a cult object and a certified hit

By Gibbs Cadiz

IF AUDIENCE APPLAUSE WERE the only gauge of a show's success, then Tanghalang Pilipino's "ZsaZsa Zaturnnah, Ze Muzikal," with a four-weekend run in February which played to full, tumultuous houses, would qualify as a home run.

"ZsaZsa" is more than a camp parade, however. By calling itself "Ze Muzikal," it demanded judgment on its song-and-dance elements, its melodic character, the vocal proficiency of its performers. Sure, it was a screamfest, but how was it as a musical?

On this the verdict was mixed. A critic, emerging from the show somewhat glassy-eyed, pronounced "ZsaZsa's" aural impact "all noise." A producer, rolling his eyes, said Vince de Jesus' melodies sounded all alike. And a director wondered why the music didn't just go all-out pop or local novelty.

De Jesus, composer-lyricist and musical director of the show, had a rebuttal ready in the playbill: "*Kasi*, Carlo Vergara's comic book in itself is a tribute to Pinoy pop culture. I thought, if I were to use pop *na* pop music for the musical—*masyado nang* predictable. *Para bang ini-ulam mo ang pansit sa kanin. Nakakaumay na*!"

So he chose soul as the musical template of "ZsaZsa." Gospel and rhythm and blues—the twin pillars of soul—"take the front seat because of their obvious musical qualities—grand, loud and exaggerated, larger-than-life—just like 'ZsaZsa,'" wrote De Jesus.

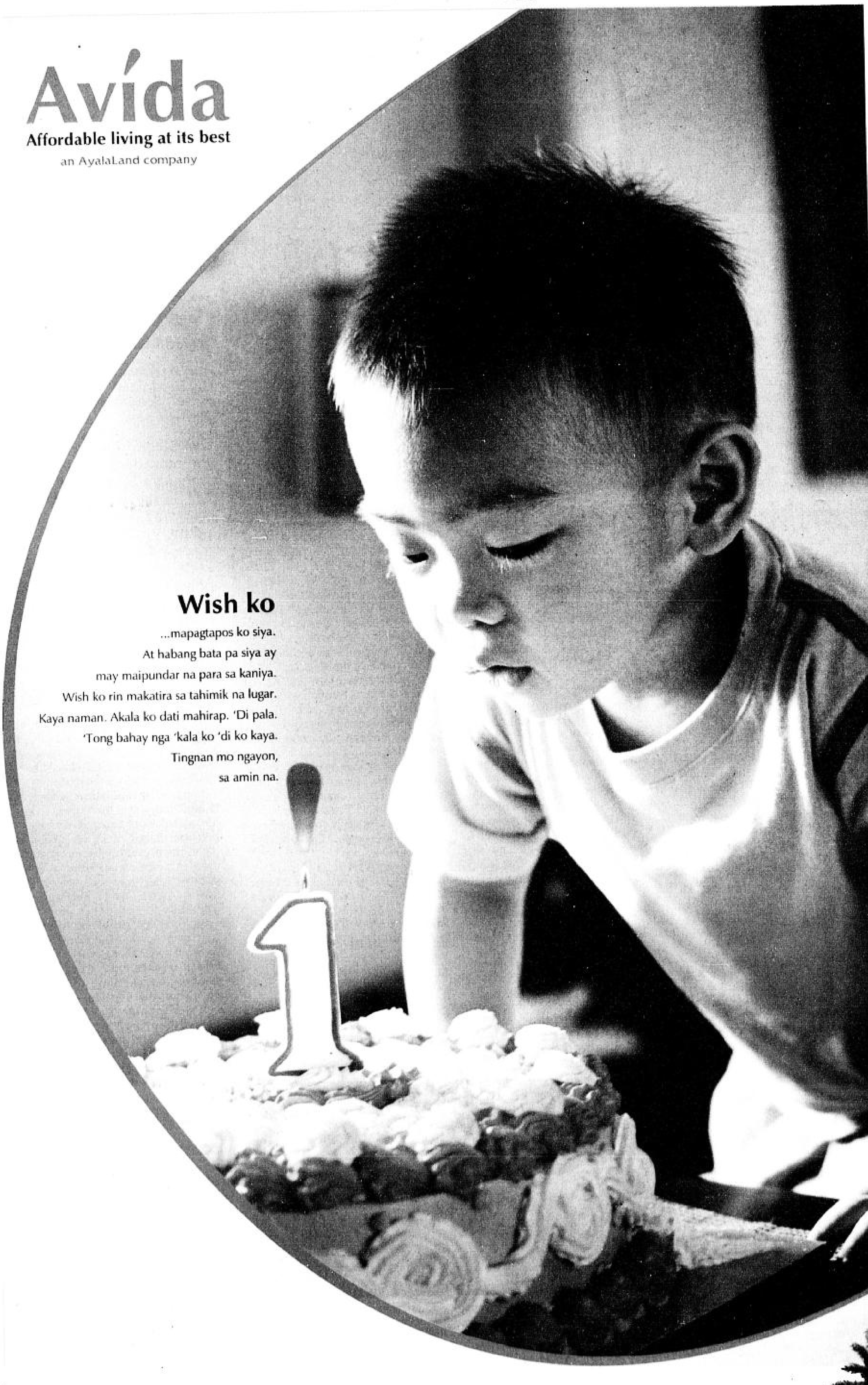
True enough, that kind of music could sound noisy combined with a shaggy set, a busy cast and performers unanimously keyed in to the material's outsize, hypertheatrical feel. Sometimes choreography, costumes, dialogue, even scenery can get in the way of appreciating the basic solidity of a musical score, and more so its shadings and shadows.

Good thing De Jesus, dipping into his pockets for lack of extra production money, decided to record "ZsaZsa Zaturnnah, Ze Muzikal" almost in its entirety, absent only the spoken text.

Rare status

The original cast recording is a welcome artifact in many respects. First, it's a documentation of a show that still enjoys the rare status of being both a cult object and a certified hit. Based on the very limited number of

'WINNER!'/ C2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'GABRIELA, AN ORATORIO'

A theatrical dazzler

The total impact of the production is unmistakably the achievement of Mabesa's sophistication

TONY Mabesa directs the cast of "Gabriela."

By Bienvenido Lumbera
Contributor

"GABRIELA, AN ORATORIO" IS A theatrical dazzler, a product of an artistic collaboration between director Tony Mabesa, playwright Joi Barrios, composer Joy Marfil, choreographer Van Manalo, musical director Rene Navarro, the UP Vocal Ensemble, the Filipiniana Dance Group and the DUP Choric Ensemble, and cast of actors all totally responsive to Mabesa's masterly hand.

Such fine ensemble work is seldom witnessed on the Philippine stage, and tribute must be paid to the full maturation of the director's exceptional talent, which could weave the variegated strands of the production into a complex spectacle that thrills the senses and stirs the militant spirit of all those who believe in heroes and in the dialectics of heroism.

Barrios' book and lyrics take off from the biography of the intrepid wife of the hero Diego Silang, who takes over the leadership of her husband's rebel band after the latter's capture and execution by the Spaniards. Barrios is less interested in the minutiae of Gabriela's life than in what she has come to stand for in today's feminist movement.

The play is divided into two parts, the first introducing the wife against the feudal backdrop of Iloko culture early in the 19th century. In the second, Gabriela is Gabby, a modern-day activist in the urban struggle for freedom and democracy.

Both D.G. (the modern-day Diego) and Gabby fall victims to the bullets of enemies. Their story, however, is not a tragic tale but, in Barrios' version, an inspirational episode in a people's march toward liberation.

The music Joy Marfil has written for the play has been able to capture Barrios' mix of deep nationalist sentiment and touches of sardonic humor, projecting an engaging ironic temper so aptly contemporary.

The total impact of the production is unmistakably the achievement of the director's sophistication. Mabesa has reinvented the oratorio as a contemporary theater form, fusing voice and movement to give body to the political intensions of Barrios' text. His blocking of figures and orchestration of voices have created memorable images of passion and militancy as no other recent theater production has been able to summon.

WEDDING of Gabriela and Diego Silang, played by Lanie Sumalinog and Miguel Castro

In this regard, Mabesa was able to successfully harness the athletic choreography of Van Manalo to generate energy and power that leave the audience breathless each time dancers stamp and whirl and tumble in approximation of the thrust of the revolutionary movement toward victory.

Lanie Sumalinog, Mae Ann Valentin and Jean Judith Javier alternate as Gabriela/Gabby; Miguel Castro and Jason Tadaya as Diego/D.G.; and Stella Cannete, Astarte Abraham and Natasha Cabrera as Mrs. Delia Delacruz.

As individuals recreating the narrative of Barrios' drama, their presence vivifies the myth of Gabriela and Diego and their reincarnation in the contemporary political scene.

SCENE from Dulaang UP's "Gabriela, An Oratorio"

'Winner!' on stage and CD

From page C1

people who had managed to see "ZsaZsa" at the cramped Tanghalang Huseng Batute, it's safe to say its niche watermarks remain intact. The 21-track CD isn't sold commercially, and whatever was peddled outside the theater during "ZsaZsa's" run quickly sold out.

Second, it's rare as much for an original Filipino musical to take the next step of producing a cast recording. On Broadway, whether a musical tanks or triumphs, a cast recording is de rigueur. Here, as any bitchy queen would tell you, *asa ka pa*. Budget—the lack of it—is, of course, a culprit, but the bigger villain is public indifference.

How many CDs of original Filipino musicals are out on Tower Records or Music One? None.

"Larawan, the Musical"—a commendable recording, as it provided the complete musical score by Ryan Cayabyab, plus lyrics by the late National Artist Rolando Tinio as well as production notes—was available for a brief while, but has now vanished.

"Rama at Sita's" sumptuously produced soundtrack is also gone. Cayabyab's canon of historical musicals—"Katy," "Noli" and "Fili," "Alikabok," "Sino Ka ba, Jose Rizal?"—is not commercially available, a fate shared by other landmark Pinoy musicals such as Gines Tan's "Magsimula Ka," Lucien Letaba's "1896," Archie Castillo and Bob Serrano's "Kenkoy Loves Rosing," or the recent "St. Louis Loves Dem Filipinos" by Antonio Africa.

Even CDs of original Filipino musicals in English, the theater du jour of the Starbucks-going middle-class crowd, never make it beyond first printing. Trumpets has often come up with sleek, classy recordings of its musical shows, such as "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" (the music of which is as Broadway-glossy as they come) and "The Little Mermaid."

Yet, like all other local theater companies, it has had to deal with tepid sales—a disinterest that only ensures an important strand of Filipino theater remains pretty much unknown and unavailable to a casual listener.

Rudimentary

The "ZsaZsa" CD is a rudimentary production. The cover is laser-printed, there are no notes explaining the musical's genesis, and the cast members themselves reportedly helped the composer cut the printouts.

The usual Pinoy resourcefulness shows in other ways. De Jesus' music honorably channels soul, but this is not the sweaty, sexually feverish music of Etta James or James Brown. What "ZsaZsa" luxuriates in is a sweetly flavored variant, short on anxiety and long on native cheer.

Comparisons are often invidious, but they may also help create context. In this case, De Jesus' efforts recall what the composer Alan Menken had earlier accomplished when he appropriated the high-kicking '60s Motown jive for "Little Shop of Horrors" and, decades later, gospel harmonies for the Disney animated film "Hercules."

"ZsaZsa's" openers for Acts I and II, for instance—choral numbers that begin with solo parts in slow, melismatic flourishes, before segueing into fast, driving. beats—echo Menken's "Skid Row (Downtown)" in "Little Shop."

In these numbers, "ZsaZsa's" high level of vocal showmanship is already evident. Joan Co and Red Nuestro bellow their solo parts with great lung power, and they're just in the ensemble.

The rest of the backup vocal work is similarly inspired. In cuts like "Victoria! Winner! Tagumpay!" (whose churchy vibe evokes "Zero to Hero" in "Hercules") and the formidable ballad "Nakikita Ko na ang Nakakasilaw na Ilaw" (hands down the best song in the show, though deliberately unfinished), the ensemble attains the tightness and freewheeling verve of doo-wop.

De Jesus' canny pop-culture instincts are also on display in the short vignettes for the "*amazonistas.*" For Dina B., he used the opening bars of "Bakit ba Ganyan?," for Sharon C. "High School Life," for Vilma S. the star's biggest hit with Edgar Mortiz, "Something Stupid," and for Nora A., her "Tawag ng Tanghalan"-winning piece, "Moonlight Becomes You," with insanely recast lyrics.

On CD, shorn of action, choreography and scenery, the singing of leads Eula Valdes, Agot Isidro and Arnold Reyes now bursts through with more engaging clarity. And, as in the live show, Ricci Chan upstages everyone with his authentically soulful, androgynous pipes.

Whether in syncopated numbers with galloping bass lines or slow tunes with only a majestic piano as accompaniment, "ZsaZsa Zaturnnah, Ze Muzikal's" smartly concocted music proves to be, well, "Tagumpay!"

"ZsaZsa Zaturnnah, Ze Muzikal" returns April 21-30 at the Peta Theater Center, QC. For tickets and soundtrack CDs, call 8323661/8321125 locals 1620-21, 0920-9535419, 5210412, 0922-8712001, 7256244 or 7218604.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph

Workshop on cheerdancing and more

PLAYSHOP PROMISES TO BE MORE interesting and exciting this year as it adds new workshops to its lineup—acting master class, creative explorers class, modeling for kids, and basic cheerdancing.

Filipinos' love for cheerdance is evident in the huge turnout of crowds during the annual University Athletics Association of the Philippines (UAAP) Cheerdance competition.

"A lot of young people are captivated by the images and choreography they see on TV, and they aspire to become cheerleaders themselves," says workshop head Lam Ligot. "We've been getting many calls—questions, suggestions for Playshop to offer cheerdance lessons. Cheerdance has evolved from mere pyramids and high kicks to a higher form of self-expression that requires high levels of creativity and endurance. And Playshop is ready to offer that training."

Former members and choreographers of the UP PEP Squad Sherwin Casepe and Love Sabio will handle the class, open to 13-year-olds and above. Trumpets is the only theater group that offers basic cheerdance aside from its traditional offerings in theater, voice and dance.

EXPRESS yourself through the Playshop cheerdancing workshop.

Playshop also offers modeling for kids 4-10 years old. This class seeks to develop at an early age children who have presence in front of the camera but can't sing, dance or act.

There is also a class for children with special needs. Called Creative Explorers, this music and theater appreciation class seeks to enhance the social skills and, ultimately, the social life, of such children while also honing their artistic potentials.

The class, to be handled by special education (SPED) teachers Naomi Tabanao and Rizza Ribbo, is open to children aged 6-12 years old.

The acting master class under Roselyn Perez is for actors and advanced students (professionals in the field) who need to brush up on their acting technique and stage performance.

Trumpets Playshop's new workshop venue is at Learning Links in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, apart from regular venues at Shangri-La Plaza Mall and Alabang Town Center. Enrollment is ongoing. Classes start April 3.

Call 6362842 or 6354478.

School of the damned

By Ruel S. De Vera

"Never Let Me Go"
By Kazuo Ishiguro
Alfred A. Knopf, New York
2005, 288 pages

NEVER LET ME GO
KAZUO ISHIGURO

CROSSING OVER INTO the corridors of Kazuo Ishiguro's "Never Let Me Go" is the equivalent of following a suspiciously pretty girl from a distance: You can barely keep up but can't stop doing it, and you pursue with a cocktail of excitement and trepidation.

A similarly unexpected mix of measure and menace, "Never" is the sixth novel from Ishiguro, the British author of the sterling "The Remains of the Day," a book of regret that also spawned a fantastic film. "Never" initially seems somewhat related, what with it being set in the tweedy confines of a British boarding school called Hailsham, but a shock lays in wait for the reader.

This deceptive boarding-school story from the 'Remains of the Day' author is a page-turner

Narrated by Hailsham student Kathy H., "Never" introduces the readers to the daily life at Hailsham, raised in sheltered isolation from the rest of the world while engaging in the pursuit of art and poetry. It appears to be an idyllic existence, where the students' only concerns have to do with teasing and their teachers, called guardians.

But in their guardians' whispers and their own doubts, the Hailsham student body, led by the thoughtful Kathy, begins to suspect there is more going on, a rumor that goes beyond nuns in the graveyard, and it's not what you think it is.

"The first time you glimpse yourself through the eyes of a person like that, it's a cold moment," Ishiguro writes. "It's like walking past a mirror you've walked past every day of your life, and suddenly it shows you something else, something troubling and strange."

In a twist that is matter-of-factly accepted by the children, "Never" lets it be known very early that all the Hailsham students are, in fact, clones, raised exclusively to become organ donors as they get older. This is a premise that is not altogether unusual in science fiction yet the novel does not employ this detail as a bombshell. Instead, "Never" first deals with how the students—in Ishiguro's dystopian England, student is a synonym for clone—deal with each other as they grow up.

Petty problems dissolve into puberty and life gets more complicated for Kathy and company, especially once they have to leave the school. But Hailsham never really goes away, as Kathy and her friends, notably the difficult yet devoted Ruth and the talented Tommy, are shadowed by the questions of exactly what was going on in Hailsham. This involves searching for the humans they were modeled after, called "possibles," among other more mundane tasks.

As they get older, as Hailsham is closed down and more of them die after donations (a process euphemistically termed "completing"), Kathy and the Hailsham alumni must face questions of their apparently limited destiny and unresolved feelings they have for each other.

To find their answers, the students must revisit what is both the coolest and cruelest experience of their lives.

All this is filtered through Kathy's observations, thoughts that range from the stolid to the sentimental, echoing Kathy's own discovery. The Hailsham students allow their curiosity get the better of them, resulting in such quirky notions as Norfolk being where all lost possessions end up. That sweet imagination meets its counterpoint in the pained realization that comes when one thinks back and sees that everything fell into place.

"Because somewhere underneath, a part of us stayed liked that: fearful of the world around us, and—no matter how much we despised ourselves for it—unable quite to let each other go," Ishiguro explains.

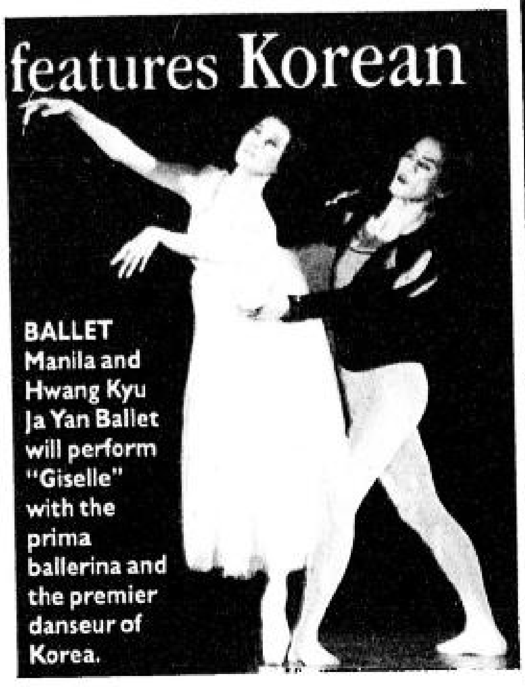
The brilliance of "Never" lies in the fully formed parallel present day all this takes place in. This is not some bad drive-in movie but a reflection on the refinement and remorse of school days, a time tainted by an unnerving sense of impending loss.

Ishiguro informs "Never" with endless tact through his layered, languid prose. Nothing jumps out of the dark corners, nothing goes bump in the night, no bloodcurdling screaming.

The nascent horror of "Never" comes from the precise lack of it. The slow unraveling at Hailsham happens with tacit acceptance, even cheerful dutifulness from most of Kazuo Ishiguro's characters, turning "Never Let Me Go" into a true tragedy of manners. It is when terrible things happen on a daily basis and are then greeted with politeness that true horror occurs.

Available in hardcover at National Book Store and PowerBooks.

Ballet Manila features Korean performances



BALLET Manila and Hwang Kyu Ja Yan Ballet will perform "Giselle" with the prima ballerina and the premier danseur of Korea.

BALLET MANILA, UNDER THE artistic direction of Lisa Macuja-Elizalde, will be hosting a two-day performance of the best of Korean classical and contemporary ballet in Star and Aliw Theaters at Star City.

Featuring joint performances with the Hwang Kyu Ja Yan Ballet Company of Seoul, South Korea, the festival will include "A Contemporary Ballet Evening" on April 22, 5 p.m., in Star Theater; and "Giselle," a timeless romantic classic, on April 23, 6 p.m., in Aliw Theater.

Korea's finest classical ballet dancers, ballerina Kim Ae Jung and premiere danseur Lee Won Kook, will be featured as the principal dancers in the two-act "Giselle." This is the couple's first performance in Manila after performing the same ballet on the stages of Europe and Northern America.

LEE WON Kook, premier danseur of Korea

Opening night will feature three Philippine premieres with Hwang Kyu Ja Yan Ballet's "16" and "1.10.11" by noted Korean choreographer Kim Kyung Young, plus a new ballet by multi-awarded Filipina choreographer Agnes Locsin.

Also featured in the contemporary ballet concert are Ballet Manila international ballet staples such as "Sayao sa Pamlang," "Arachnida" and "Dancing to Verdi."

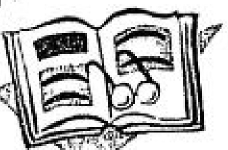
"Following Ballet Manila's successful participation in the Unesco-endorsed Andong International Festival last year, we feel it is just fitting that we host this exceptional company to showcase the strengths of Asians in the art of classical ballet," says Macuja-Elizalde, who is incidentally celebrating her 20th anniversary as the country's prima ballerina later this year.

For tickets, reservations and information, call 5255967 or 4043086, or e-mail info@balletmanila.net. Ticket prices are very affordable at P400 each on a first-come, first-served basis.

THE AUTHOR with her favorite book

HOW HAS A BOOK CHANGED MY LIFE?

'Harry Potter' taught me how to help others



By Jessica Martinez

"HAS A BOOK CHANGED YOUR life?"

Yes, it has. The specific book is "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire."

I have been a fan of the book since 2000, so I can't really remember what my life was like before then, before I started reading "Harry Potter," but the most recent change-in-my-life-because-of-a-book thing happened earlier this year, and it's all because of Hermione Granger.

Hermione, in "Goblet of Fire," saw the abuse that creatures called house-elves had to endure and started a campaign called S.P.E.W. (Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare) to protest the abuse.

Then, out of the blue, an idea came into my mind. Who are the house-elves who needed help in our world?

The poor!

So, with the help of my friends, we're now selling stuff to earn money to buy things for the poor. So, basically, reading encouraged me to give more to the needy.

In celebration of the Philippine Daily Inquirer's 20th anniversary, get a chance to win P3,000 PowerBooks gift certificates and be featured in the Inquirer's *pages by writing about the power of reading. For contest mechanics, log on to www.powerbooks.com.ph*

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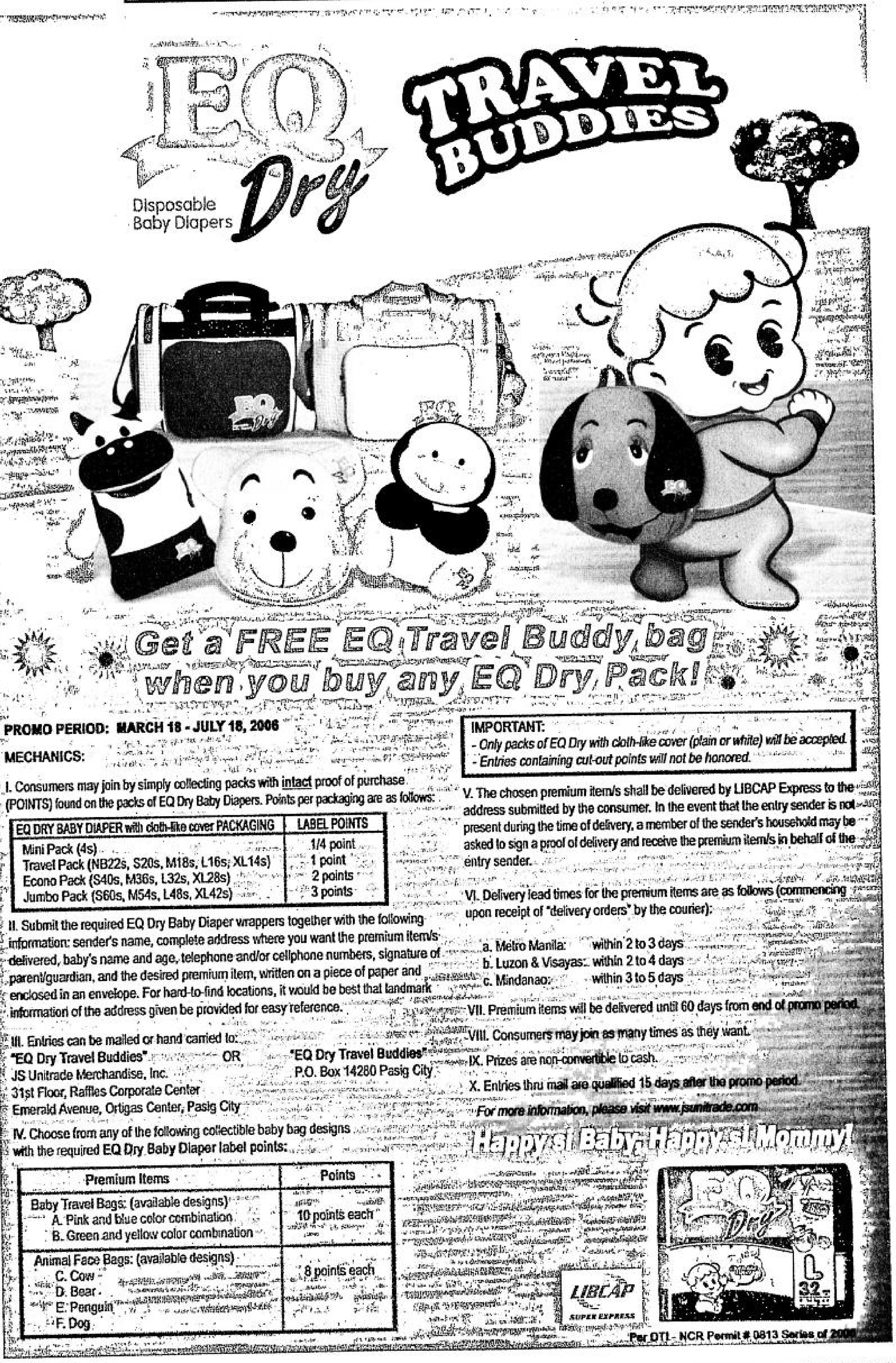

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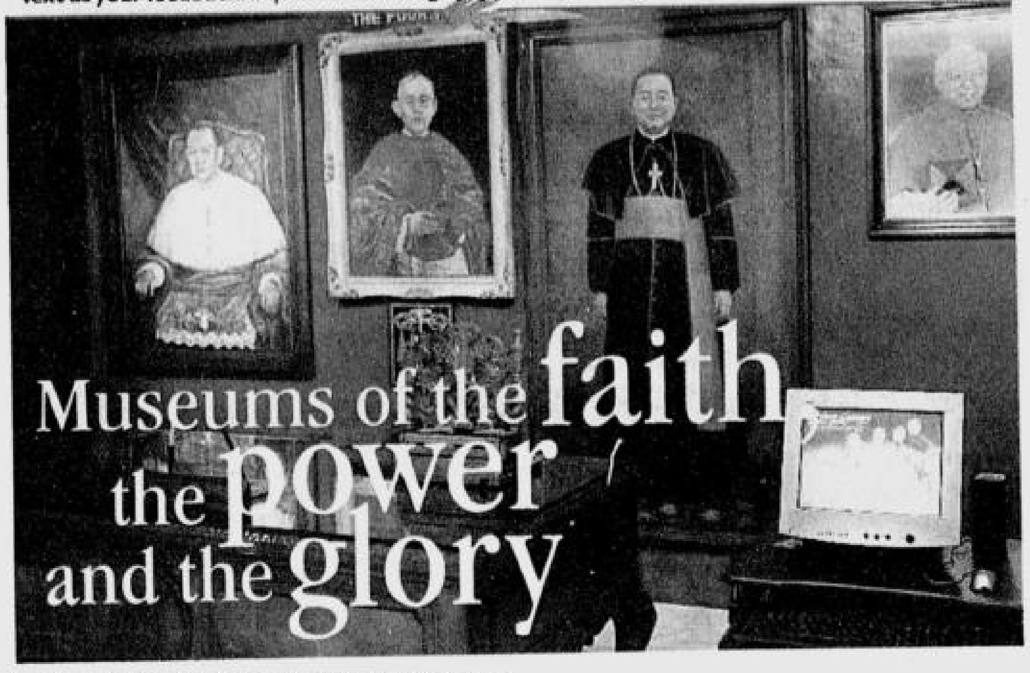
Museums of the faith the power and the glory



PORTRAITS of Filipino archbishops of Manila at the museum of the Arzobispado.

By Christian V. Esguerra

DESPITE BELONGING TO the majority religion in the country, Filipino Catholics are always hard-pressed to disabuse majority ignorance of their 2,000-year-old faith.

So how do you address the problem then?

The basic response, of course, is an aggressive catechism, one that relates, without necessarily oversimplifying, Church doctrines to the ordinary Filipino and his everyday life.

But even here, clergymen like Fr. Andrew Greeley find a vast area for improvement. In his book "The Making of the Pope 2005," the American sociologist-writer complains that a significant number of Catholics in his country ignore important Church teachings, say, on contraception.

In the Philippines, two Catholic institutions have come up with new ways to somehow re-energize the Catholic faith.

The Archdiocese of Manila has refurbished its museum into one more fit to its status as the entry point of organized Roman Catholicism in this part of the world.

University of Santo Tomas, established in 1611 through an endowment by Manila Archbishop Miguel de Benavidez who died in 1605, has mounted a quiet exhibit packaged to introduce its rectors (or, in modern language, university presidents) to the public at large, emphasizing the historic importance of the UST rectorship to the Church and nation as well as the cultural patrimony fostered by that institution.

It isn't quite easy to immediately establish the relevance of both activities, even to Catholics, in this debilitating age of Ragnarok, Counterstrike and Pinoy Big Brother. For who would prefer to see a cement bust of Felix Huertas or a rectorial medal over a riotous online game?

'Living Canopy'

But people like Fr. Gabriel Casal, director of the Manila archdiocesan museum, isn't losing hope. Instead of sulking from the steady stream of modern-day frivolities, he's picked up a convenient technology to generate appeal for his priceless artifacts.

He's come up with an interactive CD containing the history and development of the archdiocese, including paintings, busts, markers, capes, carvings and other artifacts on display at the museum. He says the CD, "Living Canopy," is so long that it'll take about five hours for a straight viewing.

It's now available for public viewing following the museum's renovation recently. The museum is on the 3/F, Arzobispado de Manila, Intramuros.

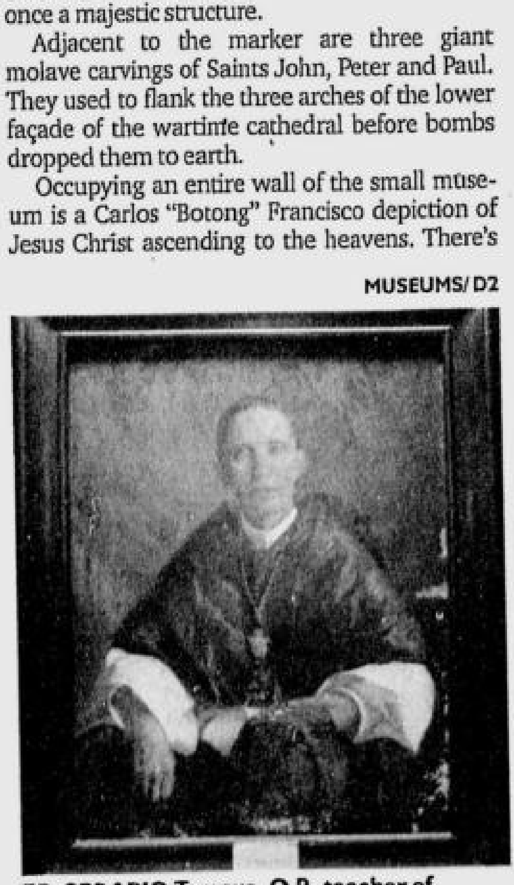
But while CDs can help bridge the generation gap, they're still no match to appreciating history, in this case, of the religious kind, by staring at the actual artifact.

Just a few steps of the entrance is the original historical marker of the seventh Manila Cathedral that stood from 1879 to 1945. The three bullet holes speak of the ill fate of what was once a majestic structure.

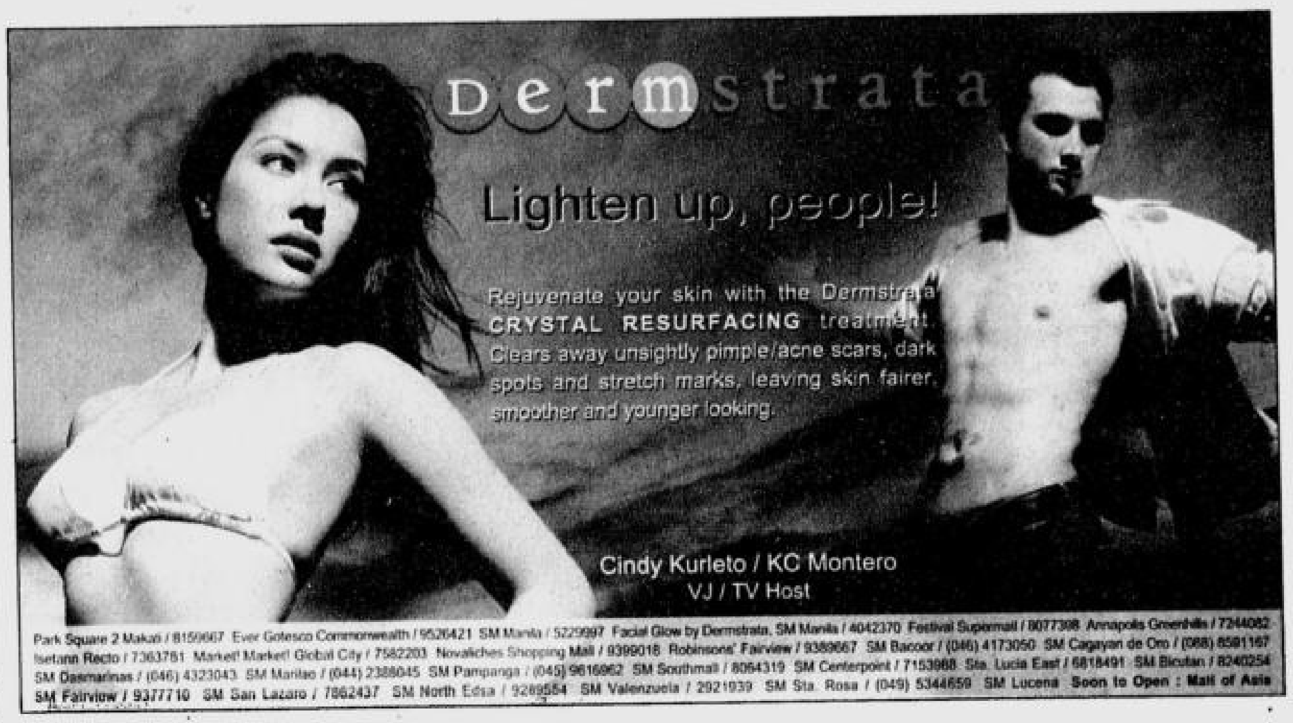
Adjacent to the marker are three giant molave carvings of Saints John, Peter and Paul. They used to flank the three arches of the lower façade of the wartime cathedral before bombs dropped them to earth.

Occupying an entire wall of the small museum is a Carlos "Botong" Francisco depiction of Jesus Christ ascending to the heavens. There's

MUSEUMS/ D2



FR. SERAPIO Tamayo, O.P., teacher of Manuel L. Quezon and Sergio Osmena, in a portrait by Amorsolo.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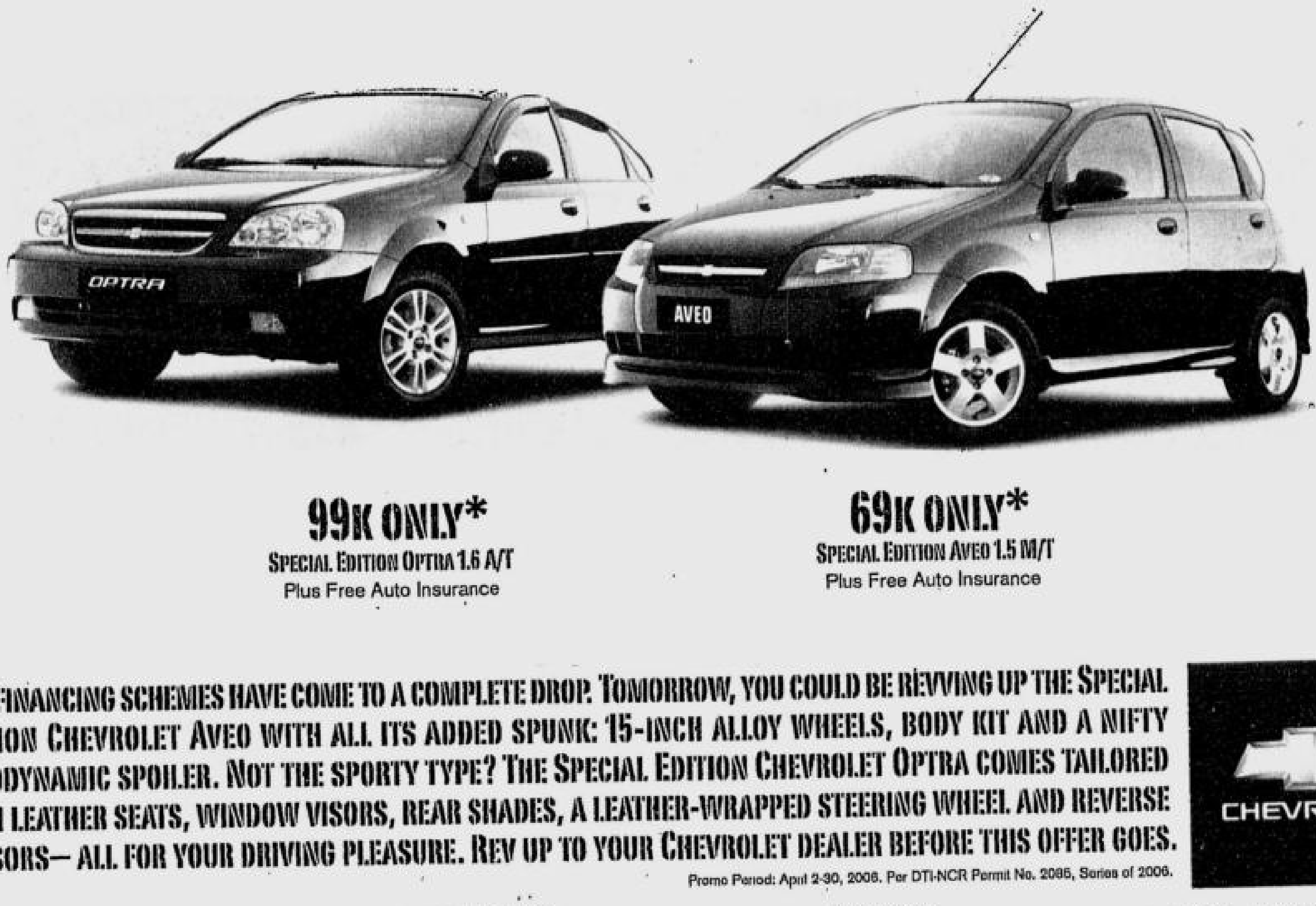

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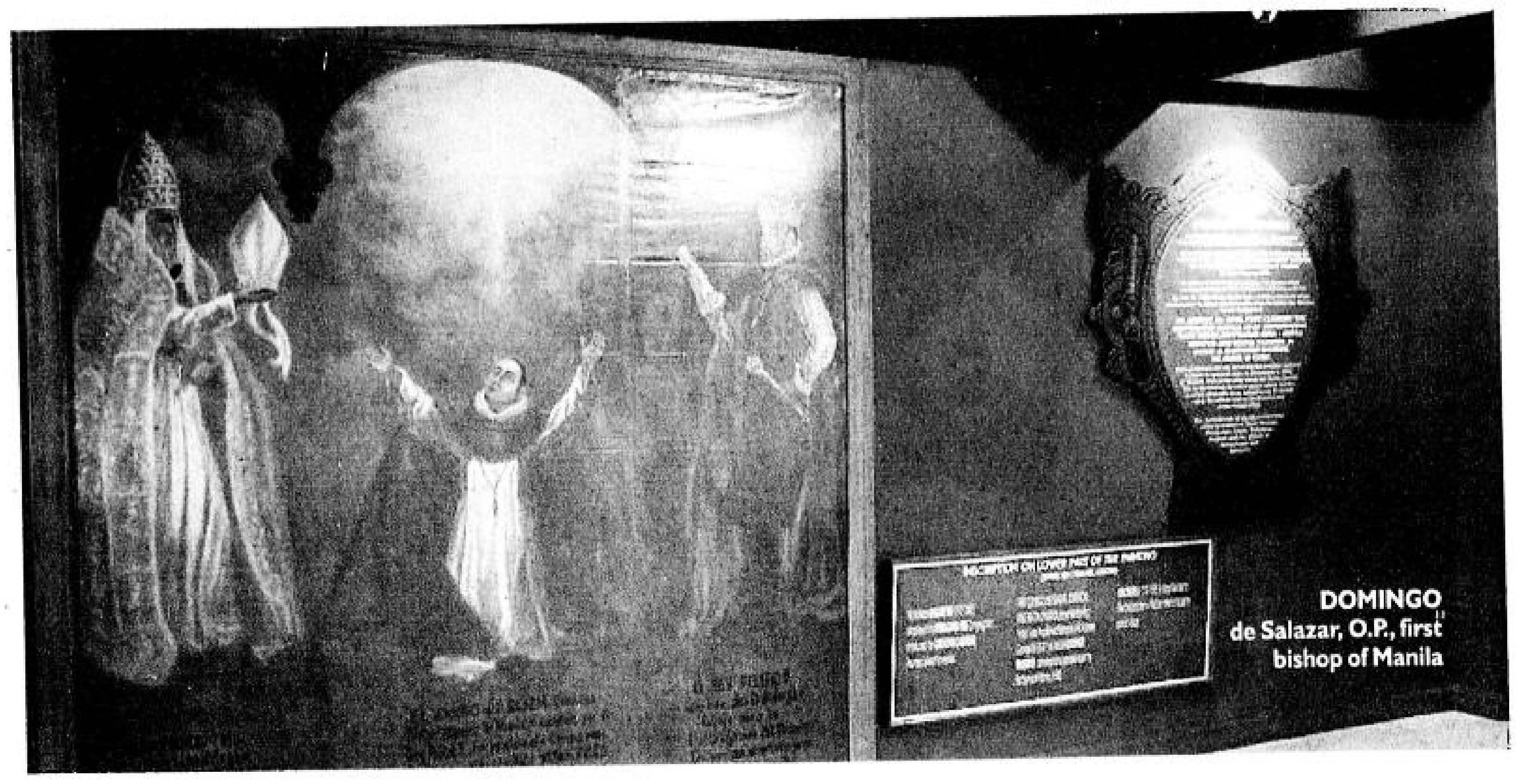
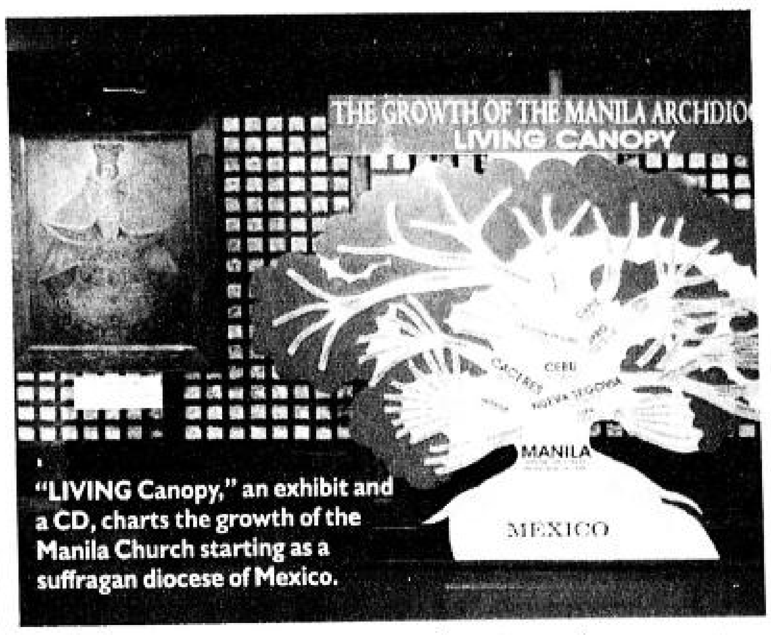
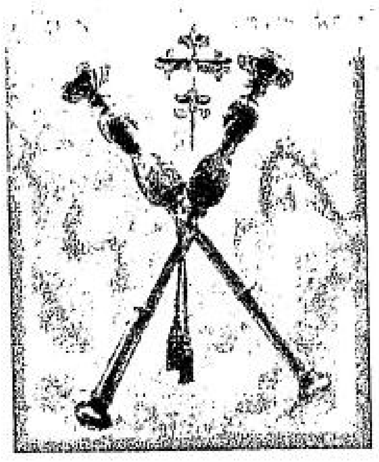


DOMINGO de Salazar, O.P., first bishop of Manila



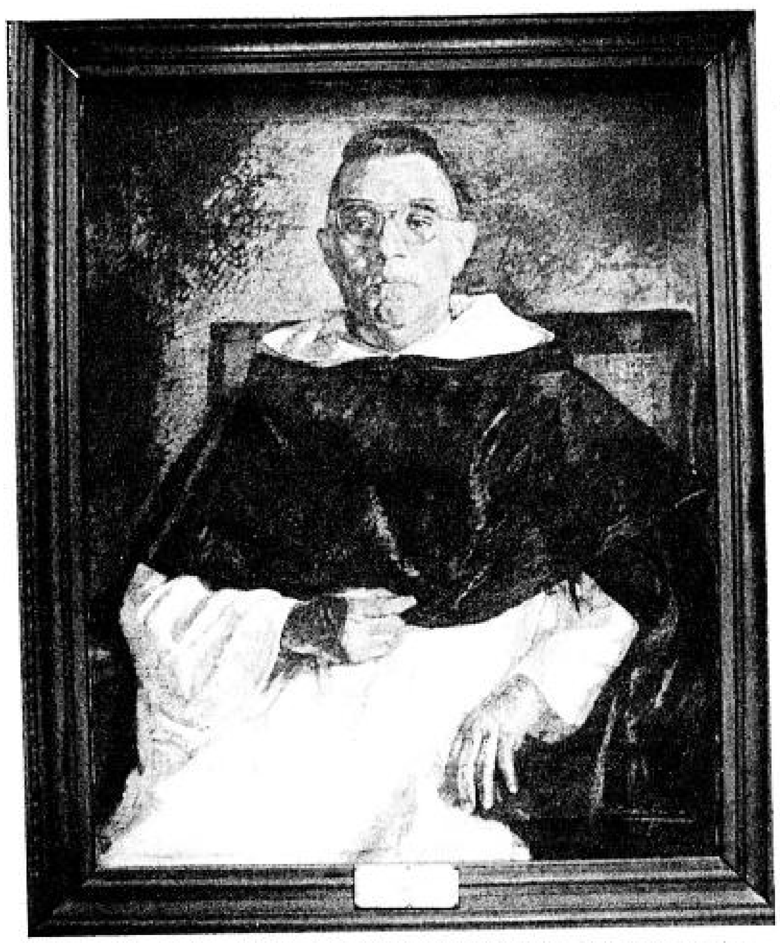
"LIVING Canopy," an exhibit and a CD, charts the growth of the Manila Church starting as a suffragan diocese of Mexico.



THE RECTORIAL maces, symbols of the UST rector's academic and spiritual authority

Museums of the faith, the power and the glory

From page D1

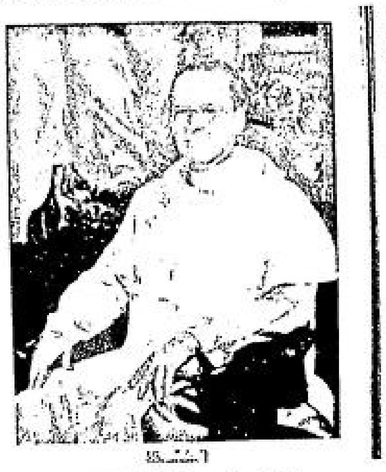


FR. ANGEL de Blas, O.P., one of the world's top psychologists during his time, in a portrait by Fernando Amorsolo.

also a glass showcase displaying works by Msgr. José Abriol, who single-handedly translated into Filipino the Old and New Testaments, Sacramentary, Lectionary and other religious books.

The archdiocesan museum, of course, won't be complete without an exhibit on Jaime Cardinal Sin and the colorful archbishops who came before him. You'll find an old desk and typewriter of Rufino Cardinal Santos and the already-brittle cape of Bernardino Nozaleda, the last Spanish archbishop of Manila.

"It's a humble collection," Casal tells the INQUIRER, explaining that other important artifacts pertaining to the history of the archdiocese were kept in more elaborate ecclesiastical museums such as that of nearby San Agustin Church.



FR. FREDERICK Fermin, O.P., a Dutch national and naturalized Filipino, in a rectorial portrait by Alfredo Esquillo

UST Museum

Others are with the safekeeping of the UST Museum of Arts and Sciences, the oldest museum in the country.

The school did an experiment of sorts by mounting an exhibit on its rectors recently.

Some might dismiss it as the school's vanity, but organizers believe there was value in introducing and explaining the role of the UST rector to Filipinos who have a short memory.

The institution of the UST rector, after all, is not without historical importance. UST is the oldest Western-style university in Asia. During the Spanish colonial era, it functioned as a bureau of education, with the UST rector having supervisory rights over all schools in the islands.

The importance of the UST rectorship in the history of higher education in the country cannot be discounted. As veritable secretary of education, the rector sat in academic tribunals to determine the fitness of a candidate for an academic degree.

One can visualize the UST rector, a Dominican scholar trained in the true scholastic and Thomistic tradition, frowning on a candidate's answer in a tribunal, waving aside the answer, and pronouncing "Non" on whether or not to grant him the degree. The first Filipino *ilustrados* such as Fr. José Burgos, Apolinario Mabini and Felipe Agoncillo underwent grilling by the academic tribunal headed by the UST rector.

The incumbent rector, Fr. Tamerlane Lana, O.P, the school's 93rd rector, admitted that the position used to be "clothed with mystery" and was once seen as the "invisible power" in the university, next only to God. "A medieval concept," he says.

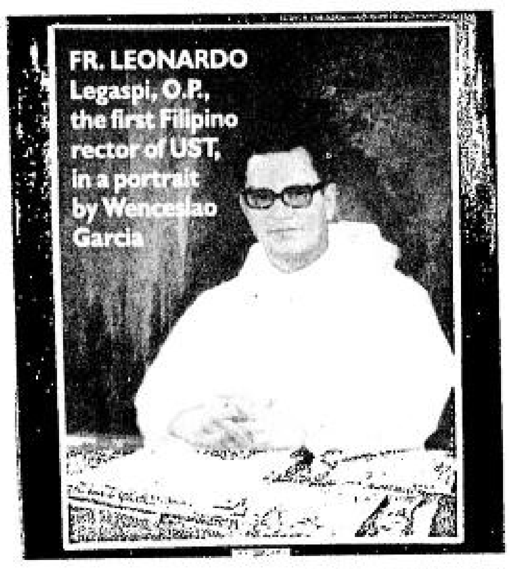
As in papal succession, moving from one rector to another requires a solemn and elaborate ceremony not alien to pure Vatican tradition. (In fact, it is the Vatican that appoints the UST rector as the school is a pontifical university, the only one of 13 in the world with that title.)

In the exhibit were the silver maces (c. 17th-18th century) and the rectorial gown and medallion, all symbolizing the authority of the rector. The passage of those symbols from one rector to another signifies the sophisticated transfer of academic authority.

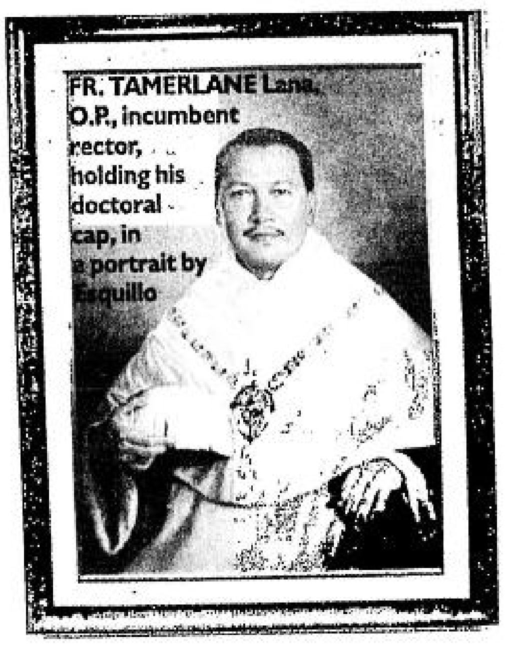
The heart of the exhibit were the huge paintings of some of the 93 rectors, done by the likes of Fernando Amorsolo, Alfredo Esquillo, Rafael del Casal, Ronald Ventura and Wenceslao Garcia. Garcia painted the first Filipino rector of UST, Leonardo Legaspi, O.P. (1971-77), who is now archbishop of Nueva Caceres.

Esquillo was a favorite of rectors, having been tapped to paint most of those on exhibit such as the portraits of Fr. Jesus Diaz (1965-70) and Fr. Rolando de la Rosa (1990-98).

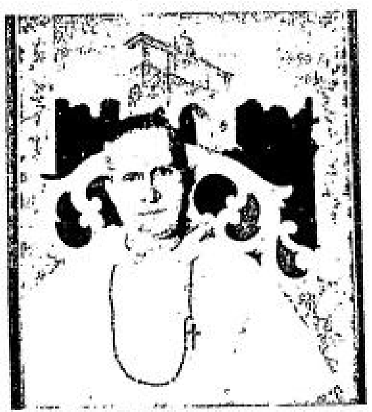
A standout were Amorsolo's paintings of Fr. Serapio Tamayo (1926-36) and his successor, Fr. Silvestre Sancho, who was rector until 1944.



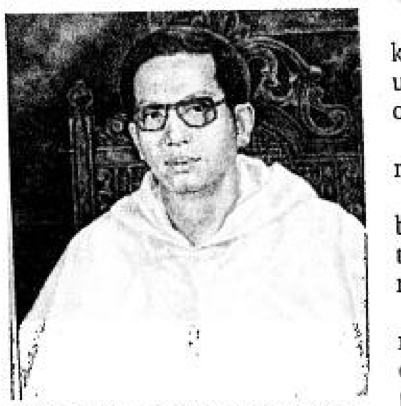
FR. LEONARDO Legaspi, O.P., the first Filipino rector of UST, in a portrait by Wenceslao Garcia



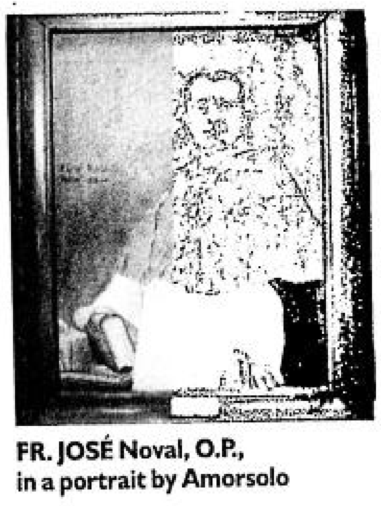
FR. TAMERLANE Lana, O.P., incumbent rector, holding his doctoral cap, in a portrait by Esquillo



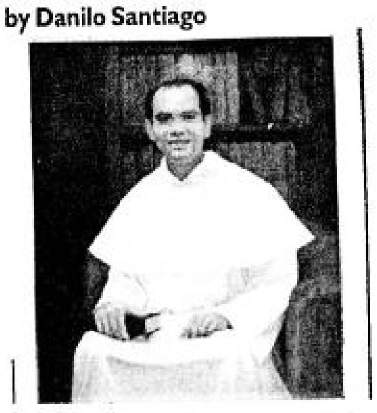
FR,. JESUS DIAZ, O.P. in a rectorial portrait by Esquillo



FR. NORBERTO Castillo, rector from 1982 to 1990, in a portrait by Danilo Santiago



FR. JOSÉ Noval, O.P., in a portrait by Amorsolo



FR. ROLANDO V. de la Rosa, O.P., who became chairman of the Commission on Higher Education, in a portrait by Esquillo

INCLUDED in the exhibit is the Anales de Manila, the history of the archdiocese from ancient times.

Summer streetwalking discoveries

From page D4

smells and cuisine.

In ethnic neighborhoods, you may find things out of the ordinary, as well as exotica and shops stocked with interesting goods.

Walking is really the only way to discover your city. Walk when the sun is not at its summer peak, either early in the morning or late in the afternoon.

During the noon hours, you may enjoy a slow, long lunch in the coolest place you can find. Stay there as long as they will let you. Allow the sun to start cooling off before you go back on the street.

Where to walk? Try your neighborhood first. Take a fresh look at what you have always taken for granted—the same old houses, sidewalks, rutted streets—but see how they tell the story of your neighborhood.

Are there still houses from a few generations ago? Have these houses been replaced with newer ones? Has the neighborhood gone commercial? Have shop spaces been built in the big front yards? On the other hand, discover how wonderful those front yards may still exist.

Are there special things to buy in your neighborhood? Are there homes, shops or restaurants that sell unusual food?

WHAT we think of as nondescript urbanscapes still tell a story, like this group of late 1950s buildings whose skeleton survives in the shadow of a skyscraper.

What makes your neighborhood extraordinary? How would it stand out compared to the other sections of the city?

If you heed help, a good guidebook that can navigate you around Manila is "Street-Bound" by Josefina Manahan, published by Anvil Publishing.

Manahan lists various types of walks around Manila that allow people to appreciate nature (yes, there still is some of it in the city), history, culture, and of course, non-mall shopping.

All of Manahan's walks take you through Manila, bringing out the pulse of the city that can never be duplicated in any of the malls.

Walking tour guides

If you would rather be walked around the city, then contact either Ivan ManDy at oldmanilawalks@gmail.com or Carlos Celdran. Both do walking tours.

Ivan calls himself a Streetwalker. He takes people on walks through Tsinoy Binondo in central Manila.

He has another walk at the Chinese Cemetery showing that the cemetery is probably the city's most comprehensive architectural museum and also the honor the Chinese community accords its ancestors.

Tsinoy culture comes to life when he does unforgettable food walks through the kitchens of Binondo for a memorable encounter with the Chinese culture of taste.

Carlos Celdran presents his own take on Manila, sometimes irreverent, but always humorous and engaging.

When he tackles the CCP Complex, he brings out the Marcos mania for iconic architecture. He walks you through Intramuros, develops nostalgia for bygone days while doing a reality check on the *ilustrado* lifestyle.

I really don't know who can walk people through Cebu, Vigan, Iloilo and other places outside of Manila. I am sure that those people exist and ask them to drop me an e-mail.

When I find out who they are and after trying out their walks, then I will publish the contact information of the more interesting walkers.

E-mail the author at afvillalon@hotmail.com

Bishop Reyes marks 25th anniversary

THE DIOCESE OF ANTIPOLO IS CELEBRATING the 25th episcopal anniversary of Bishop Gabriel V. Reyes.

Bishop Gabby, as he is popularly known to his flock, was born in Kalibo, Aklan on Aug. 3, 1941, to Congressman Juan M. Reyes of Aklan and Josefa Villaruz of Roxas City. He is the nephew of the late Manila Archbishop Gabriel M. Reyes, the first Filipino archbishop.

He entered Our Lady of Guadalupe Minor Seminary in Makati and took his B. S. Philosophy and B. S. Theology in San Carlos Seminary in 1953.

On Dec. 21, 1966, Rufino Cardinal Santos ordained him to the priesthood. Reyes became secretary to the Cardinal.

When Jaime Cardinal Sin became the archbishop of Manila in 1974, he took Bishop Gabby as his secretary. He became auxilliary bishop in 1981. At the episcopal conference, he was chairman of the Commission on Migration and Tourism, 1983-1995. In 1993, he became the bishop of Kalibo until 2003, when he became the bishop of Antipolo.

For Reyes's 25th episcopal anniversary, the Parish Pastoral Council of Antipolo will hold a celebration at the Assumption College in Antipolo today.

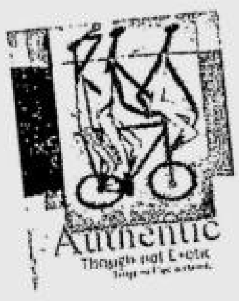
Colloquium on Filipino identity

INSTITUTO Cervantes is holding a round-table discussion on Filipino identity on April 4, 7 p.m., featuring English literature professor Isagani R. Cruz., writer Jessica Zafra, and anthropology professor Fernando Zialcita.

Highlight of the colloquium is a talk by Zialcita on his book "Authentic though Not Exotic," a collection of essays that address aspects of Filipino identity. The colloquium will be moderated by sociologist Chaco Molina.

Instituto Cervantes is now in its new home at 855 TM Kalaw St., Ermita (a few minutes' walk from the UN LRT station). Call 02-5261482 to 85.

"Authentic though Not Exotic," published by the Ateneo Press (02-4265984), is now available in Popular and Solidaridad bookstores.



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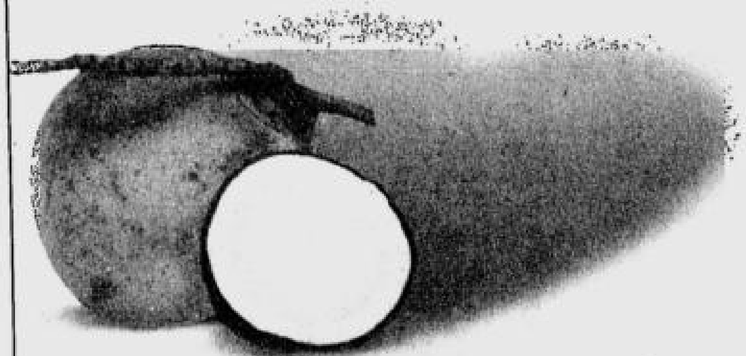
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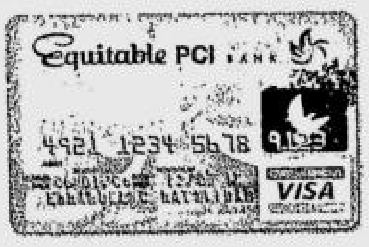

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INGREDIENTS:

1	small pouch	tamarind soup powder
5-6	cups	rice water
2	pcs	tomatoes, quartered
2	pcs	medium-sized onion, quartered
1	pc	radish, sliced diagonally
2	pcs	SARANGANI BAY BONELESS BANGUS BELLY
4	pcs.	okra, cut into halves
		kangkong, eggplant (optional)
		salt to taste

PROCEDURE:

Boil the tamarind soup base in rice water. Upon boiling, add the tomatoes, onion, radish, and salt. When vegetables are nearly done, add the sliced fish, then boil until fish is done. Add the rest of the vegetables, then simmer until cooked.

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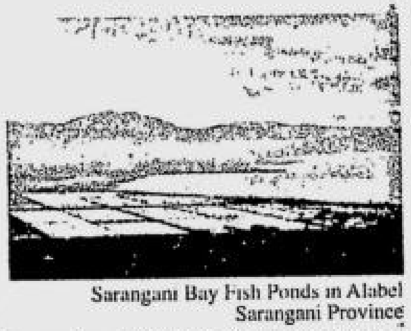

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Visit www.saranganibay.com for bangus recipes.

Summer streetwalking discoveries

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

GET OUT OF THE MALLS AND go streetwalking this summer. There is nothing like discovering the Philippine city, whether it be Manila, Cebu, Baguio, or whatever city you happen to find yourself in.

Actually each city has a story of its own, one that can be felt with the senses while walking, and the more you discover the story the more it comes to life. Some accurately call it feeling the pulse of the city.

Each city and each neighborhood within the city has a story of its own and therefore beats with an individual pulse.

There is a languid feel when experiencing Manila's Pasig River from the river walk along densely forested Arroceros Park that reminds you of José Rizal's late 19th-century descriptions of the beloved river.

On the opposite bank of the river is one of the business centers of Manila. There energy bristles. It presents another face of the city where the pulse is understandably different.

The pulse of a city is a combination of many things that take place within the protective envelope of a series of homes and buildings that form the urbanscape.

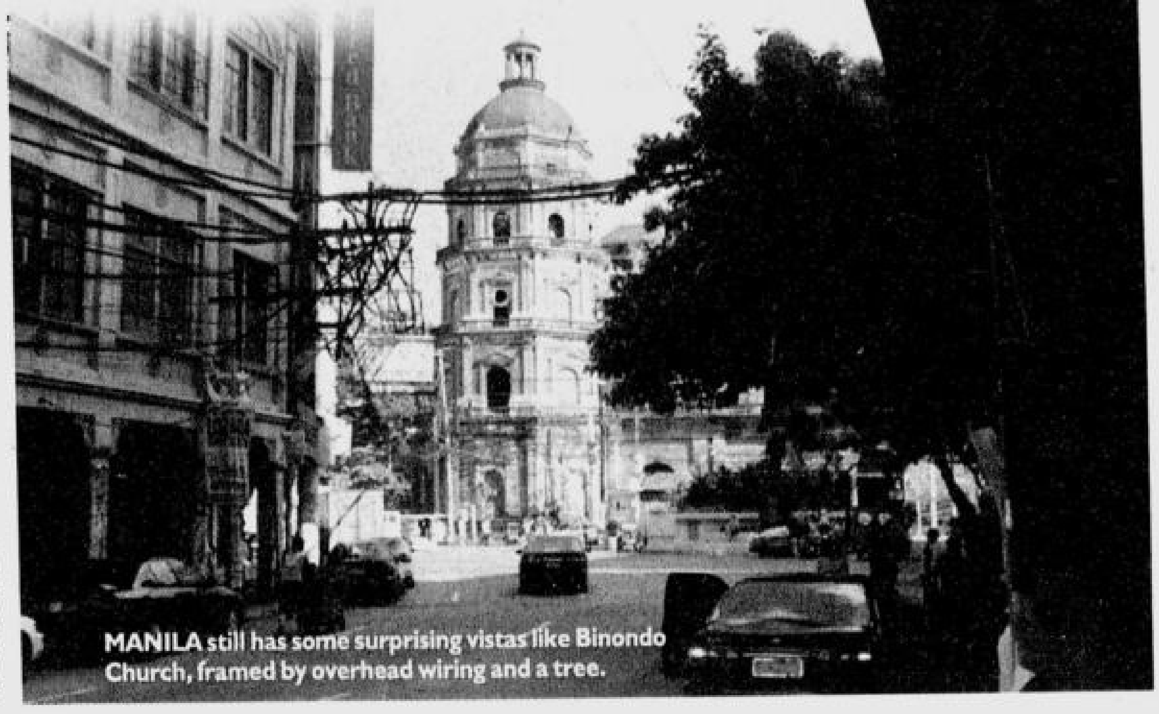
Within the vast urbanscape of each city, neighborhoods are pockets that reflect the distinct lifestyles of their inhabitants.

These are streetscapes inhabited and colored by the people—their visuals, sounds, smells and tastes that together illustrate the pulse of that particular section of the city.

A market neighborhood is obviously different from a purely residential neighborhood. A neighborhood of houses has a character totally unlike that of a skyscraper neighborhood.

Ethnic neighborhoods add a different flavor to the city. These are places where everything changes from the ordinary, the people, their sights, sounds,

SUMMER/ D2



MANILA still has some surprising vistas like Binondo Church, framed by overhead wiring and a tree.

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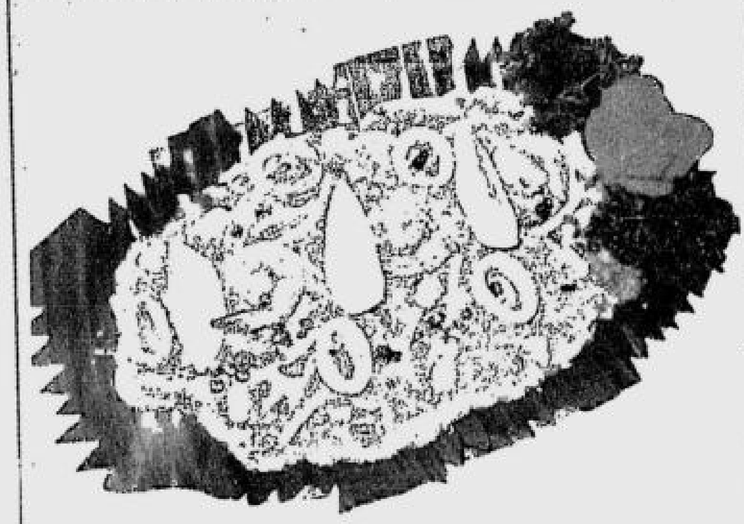

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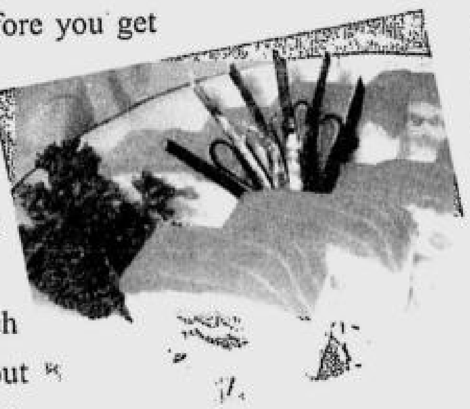
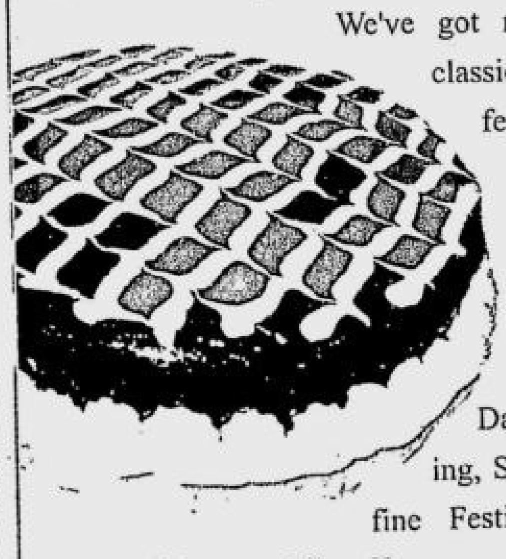


This March DADS rolls out the red carpet for the 2006 grads! All graduates get a free for-grads-only drink and a commemorative stuffed toy, and grads dining with six persons or more get a free ultimate buffet meal! Bring your family and friends for a banquet of good food and fun activities.

Commemorate your achievements with a feast no one can forget. Celebrate a great graduation tradition at Dads, Kamayan, and Saisaki. It's the Ultimate Graduation Party at the Ultimate Buffet venue! We've got new specialties, classic favorites, and festive buffets to fill your Graduation day with feasting! A grand Mediterranean Feast is Dads' buffet offering, Saisaki presents a fine Festival of Salmon dishes, while Kamayan Klasiks buffet features all your all-time favorites.



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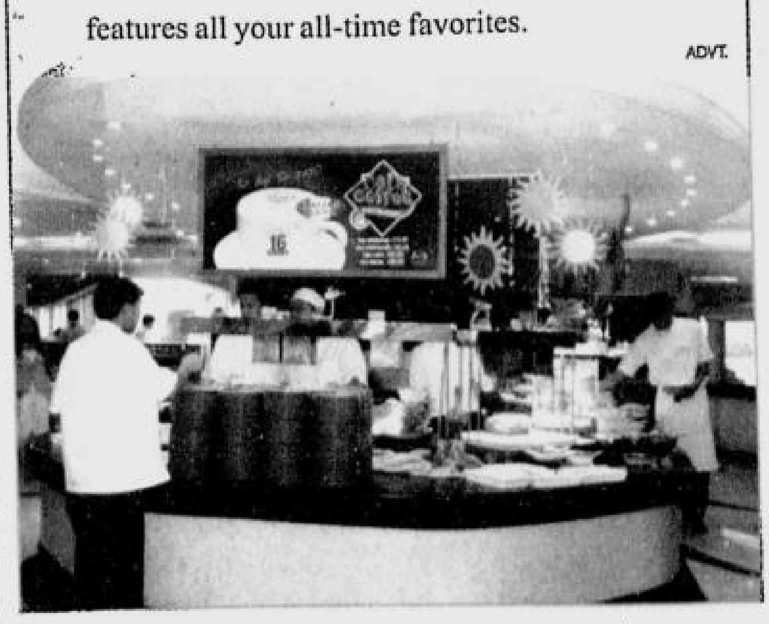

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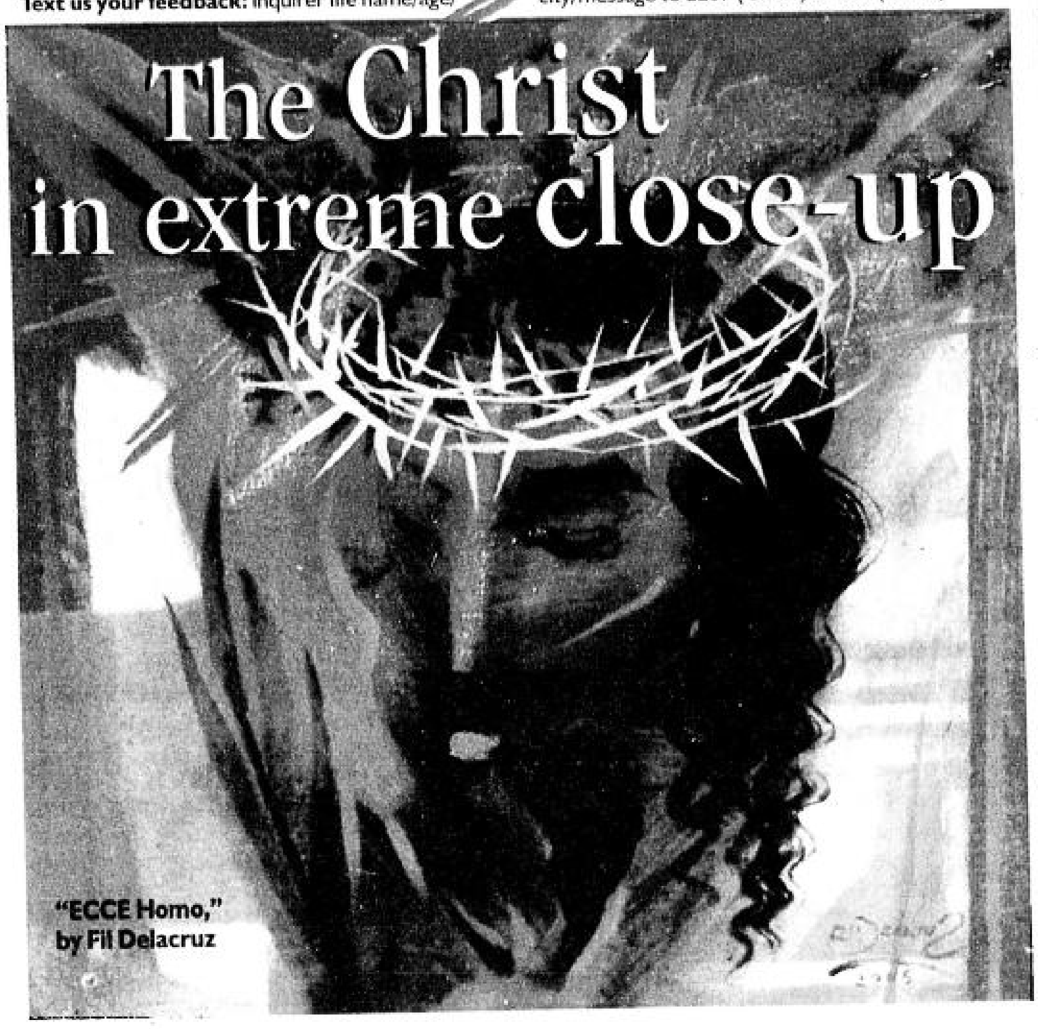
The Christ in extreme close-up



"ECCE Homo," by Fil Delacruz

By Lito B. Zulueta

KRISTO," the annual exhibit of the suffering Christ that is the brainchild of artist Salvador Ching, appears to have evolved an iconography of its own. In depicting the passion and bloodshed of the divine sacrifice, the exhibit prefigured the raw brutality of Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ."

That movie has been received in the anodyne-prone, painkilling West with shock and outrage for its gory depiction of Jesus' last hours in the hands of His tormentors, confounding Filipinos on what the fuss is all about. Since they have largely marked the annual Lent with breast-beating, mortification, flagellation, and even reenactment of the Crucifixion, Filipinos know what Gibson's Christ is all about. It's powerful, yes, but no big deal.

The image of the suffering Christ is the only Christ Filipinos know: It portends all what the Christian has to go through in this valley of tears; it presupposes the Resurrection, the valley of bliss. "Kristo" is the Filipino Juan de la Cruz himself transcending the world.

But "Kristo" points to a new Christian iconography. In holding the yearly exhibit focused on the passionate mien, "Kristo" breaks away from traditional iconography of the Christ, which basically presents the Lord in long shot, not so much a historic approximation, but an evocation of the Passion and the death's timeless significance as well as its devotional dimension.

"Kristo" this year is entitled "Behold," in reference to John 19:5 in which Pontius Pilate, after having Christ flogged, presents Him to His accusers, "Ecce homo (behold the man)!" It presents the Christ in extreme close-up.

The artist seems to delight in laying bare

THE CHRIST/ E3

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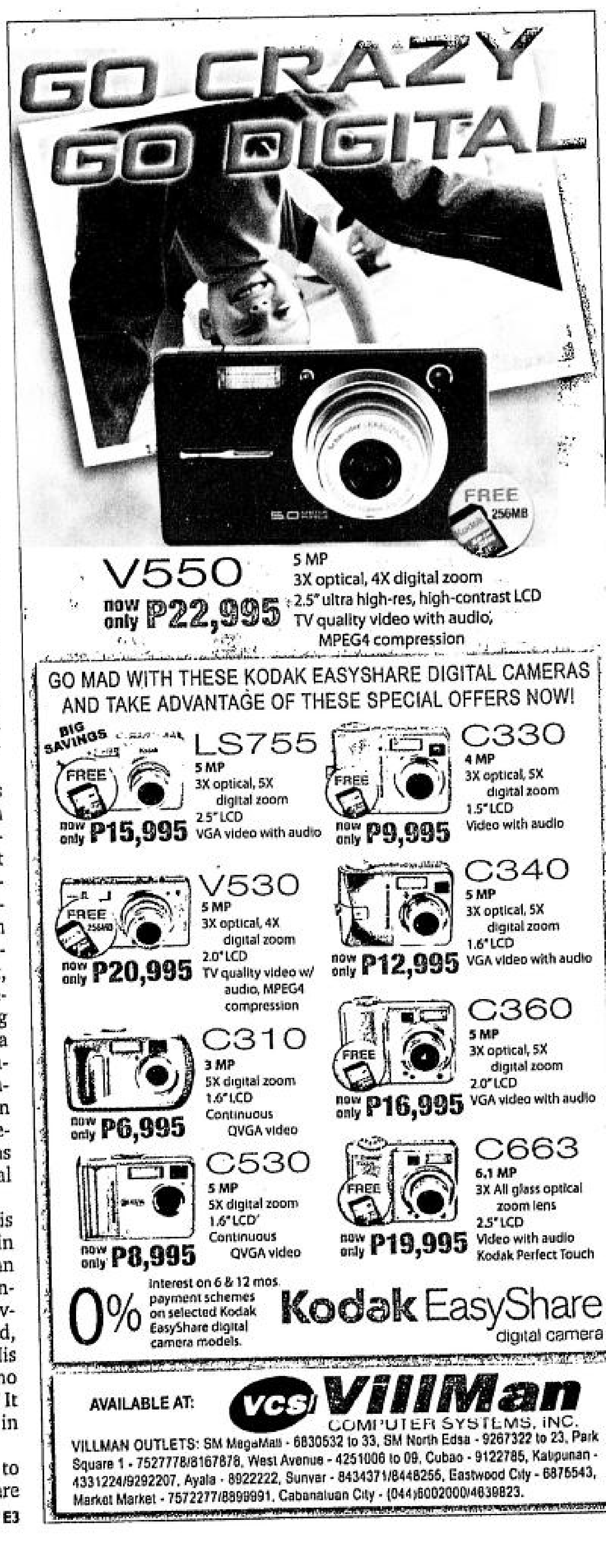

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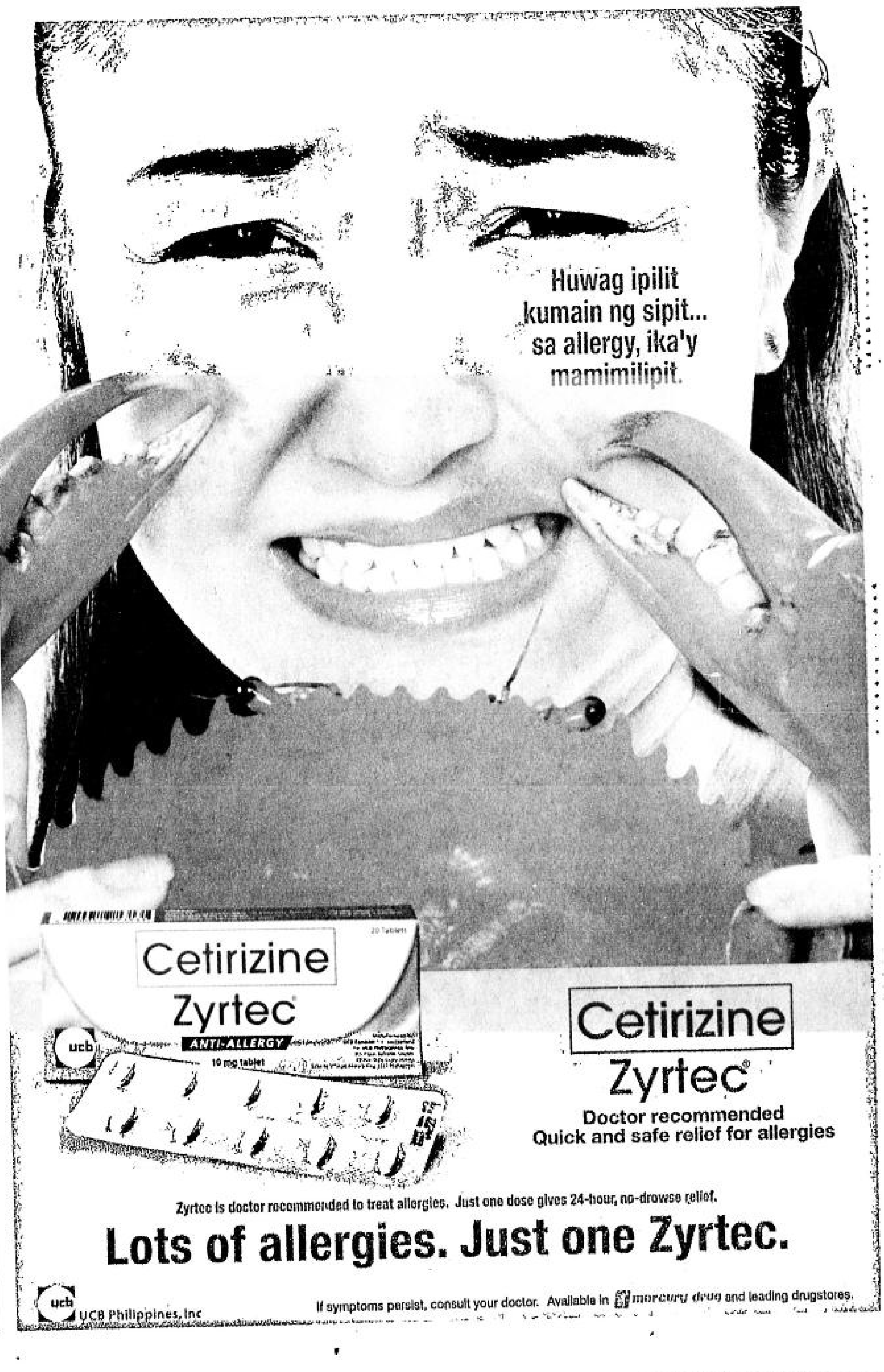

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An exaltation of colors and a riot of forms

By Constantino C. Tejero

THIS COUNTRY IS BRIMMING OVER with aesthetic pleasures and so abounding with natural artists that it's no longer surprising to find a hard-nose businessman like Carlos Rocha burst into the art scene.

One glance and one recognizes this one as a Filipino Fauvist. Rocha uses color with the enthusiasm of a child or a born colorist.

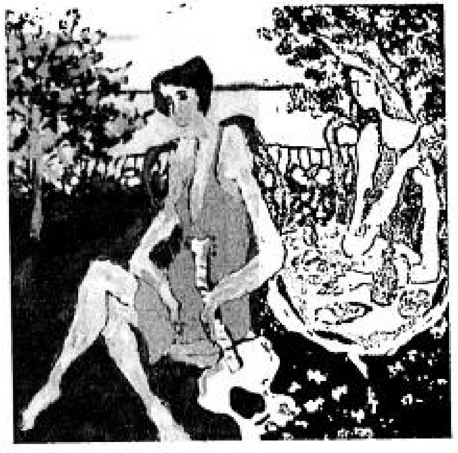
If his paintings evoke European art of the early 20th century, it is because he has soaked in the styles and techniques of the Post-Impressionists, the Cubists, the Expressionists, but most obstinately of the Fauvists. He uses the simplification of form by Matisse, the manic brushwork of Van Gogh, the sense of perspective of Cézanne, but especially the pure contrasting colors of the Fauvists.

"I really admire the theory of simplicity of Matisse," says Rocha. *'Ang habol ko talaga kay* Van Gogh *'yung tapang n'ya sa kulay."*

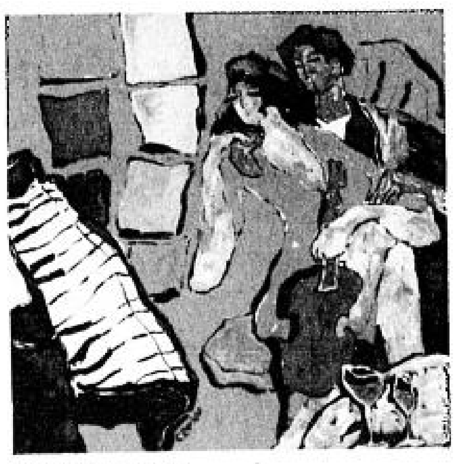
If his paintings also have a whiff of the Filipino Modernists about them, it is because he has immersed in the art of Victorio Edades and Vicente Manansala, colleagues in University of Santo Tomas of his father Julio, who was the first Filipino dean of Architecture at UST. He and his draftsmen, such as Onib Olmedo, were the young Rocha's informal tutors.

Running various family businesses most of his life, he retired as a businessman three years ago to pursue his "life-long desire to be a full-time artist," and has been spending an average of 12 hours in front of the canvas since. He mounted his first one-man exhibit of paintings and sculptures that year.

Now 56, Rocha is holding only his sixth solo exhibit, "Carlos," 25 pieces in acrylic on canvas and three sculptures in mixed media (resin, steel bars, wire, enamel paint), until April 9 in the Glass Wing, 2/F, Ayala Museum, Makati Ave. cor. De la Rosa St., Makati City.



"GARDEN Pleasantries"



"THE PIANIST"

Joyous world

A riot of highly contrasting primary and secondary colors greets viewers the moment they enter the gallery. Fauvism's joyous world is here made manifest in each canvas.

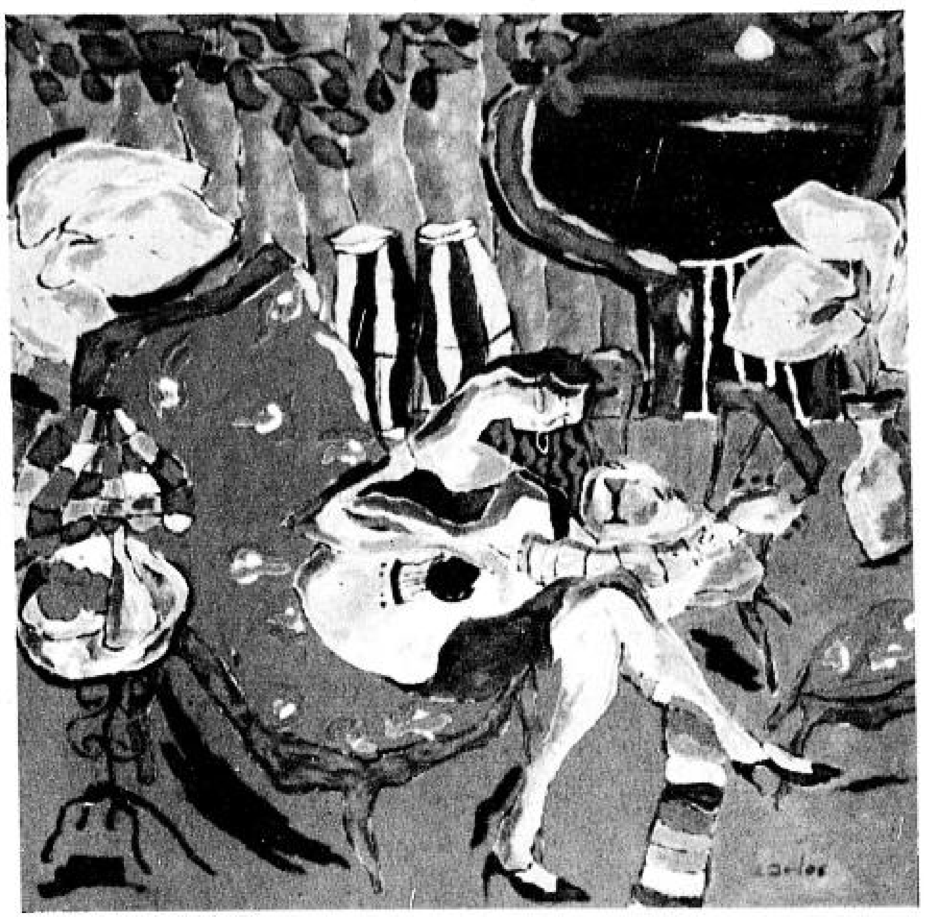
By the entrance is a large painting, "Bohemian Ballad," depicting a woman amid planes of red, fuchsia, yellow, orange, green, blue, playing a stringed instrument among apples, lampshade, potted plants with gigantic yellow leaves.

Of similar composition but in a relatively somber tone is "Lady Who Waits," with a woman in a blue dress despondent amid orange floor, red chair, lampshade, and an open window unfolding a view of a village. In theme and composition this strongly resembles Matisse's "The Dinner Table (Harmony in Red)."

The European feel of these paintings is evident not only in the style but especially in the imagery. From hotel interior to meadow to seascape—in pieces such as "The Harbour," "The Village," "The Windmill," "Old Port"—it's obviously foreign soil. It could be the Mediterranean, the coast of Spain or Southern France, the Italian countryside or the Casbah.

"Crimson Sky" is a study not only of pure contrasting colors but also of complex structures and perspectives, and a happy merging of landscape and still life: a foreground of blue and green bottles and wine glasses on blue tabletop and a background of green field and blue sea cut in the middle by orange houses with red rooftops.

"Under the Tuscan Sun" is a rolling panorama of golden field, red rooftops, violet mountain range, turquoise sky. "The Red Terrace" has yellow chair and table on red tile floor framed by flowering hedges of yellow, blue and violet. "The Harlequin" is a sheer blaze of diamond pattern in yellow, red and black with an orange sun against a cobalt-blue sky.



"BOHEMIAN Ballad"

Stylized pieces

The Fauvists' celebration of life is apparent in genre pieces such as "Café-Bar," "Jazz Time," "The Pianist," "The Swing," "All Summer Long," "Garden Pleasantries"—with their hectic imagery and savage colors.

Even pieces relatively muted in color tonality demonstrate a strong colorism: "The Music Room," with a black piano, white floor and red walls; and "In Solitude," a night scene with moon and stars, chair and table in a garden, and a sailboat moored under a tree.

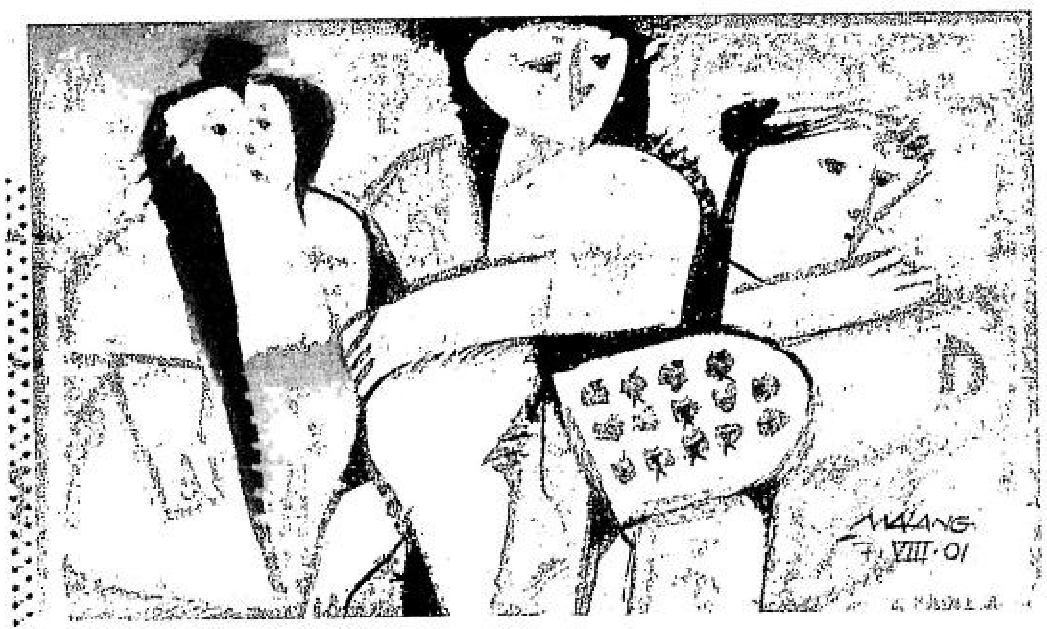
The sculptures are of resin painted thallo-green to resemble metal, then mounted on sculptured glass. Elongated and roughhewn figures in distorted postures, they exhibit a strong sense of movement, in the highly stylized manner of Solomon Saprid.

"String Serenade" has a man pouring his heart out through the strains of his violin. "The Builder" is a man with a long rod securing a cornerstone with all the straining of his sinews. "The Harvest" depicts three fishermen flexing their muscles to haul a net of catch.

Rocha says he had been sculpting in this manner long before he first saw a Saprid piece. In fact, his basic form was inspired by a sculptural piece brought from Peru by his former schoolmate and fellow Ilonggo, the basketball player Francis Arnaiz.

He says he doesn't use clay scale models for these pieces but directly applies resin on steel bar. He also directly applies paint on canvas, with no sketch or drawing.

"I used to copy the sketches and drawings of others, *pero nahirapan ako,*" he confides. "So I started doing things spontaneously. I just let my hand and mind move, and let my personality speak. I'm sure nobody paints like these paintings, exactly this way—because they're my signature."



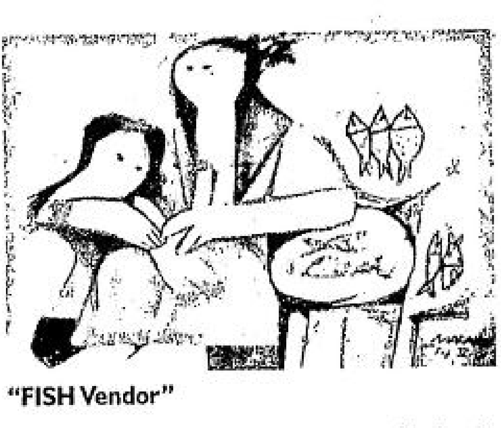
"THREE Sisters"

Malang's works on paper

MALANG AGAIN PROVES HIS MASTERY OF gouache in his latest exhibit, "Works on Paper."

The show features Malang's continuing passion to paint and willingness to experiment with lines and design, which is why he still spends much of his day painting or sketching. Women and vendors are among his favorite subjects, and each piece has a character (and sometimes even a history) of its own.

As art critic Cid Reyes wrote, "Malang's art posits no radical aesthetics or problematic dilemma: What he offers us instead is an amplitude of feeling and exhilaration embodied in works at once controlled and free-wheeling, an art no longer for decorators' salons, but truly and significantly an art for museum."



"FISH Vendor"

Malang's works on paper are on display in Gallery 828, at Art Plaza, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, April 8-22. Gallery 828 is owned by Ophie Dee. Call 6375795 to 96.

Limpe's expressionist pisces

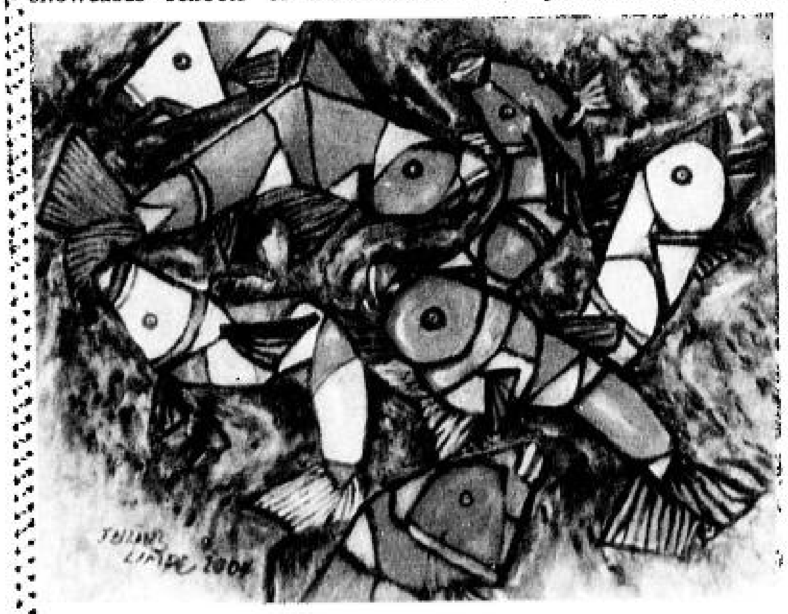
JULIUS LIMPE, POPULARLY known for his trademark fish paintings, brings back his world of fishes, a unique environment inhabited by fantastic creatures.

Titled "Fish-ful of Prosperity," the exhibit showcases schools of multicolored fish dancing, prancing and swirling around one another as though choreographed. The exhibit opens April 4, 6:30 p.m., in the Crucible at Megamall.

Limpe brings to his show a truly unique and idiosyncratic style, infusing his characters with a variety of emotions. Twenty pieces are rendered in acrylic, with colors so vibrant and dynamic one invariably gets seduced by the display of hues. The varied movements radiate a primal energy and force.

An expressionist painter who has exhibited in various capitals around the world, Limpe has met the challenge of his collectors, that is, doing an all-fish show in observance of the Lenten season.

The exhibit runs until April 16. Call 6356061.

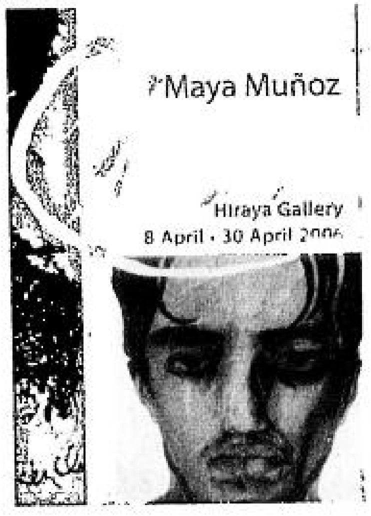


"FANTASY"

VISUAL ARTS

Muñoz at Hiraya

HIRAYA Gallery is opening "Closer," a one-woman exhibit of US-trained Maya Muñoz, on April 7. The show unfolds in successive huge frames a personal tale of a woman's ascent to the peaks of her obsession as a lover. Muñoz draws full figures, brushing her boards with unusual compelling colors, and saturating her exhibit with an elegant and wholly rounded theme. The show runs until May 14. Hiraya is at 530 United Nations Ave., Ermita, Manila. Call 5233331 or visit www.hiraya.com



'Fourplay' at Astra

"FOURPLAY," a show of Virgilio Aviado, Bencab, Justin Nuyda and Edwin Wilwayco, will open on April 6 in Galerie Astra, LRI Business Plaza, 2/L, Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air, Makati. The show consists of Aviado's "Variations on a Theme of Sanchez-Cota'm," Bencab's nudes, Nuyda's abstract landscapes and Wilwayco's "Moving Mountain" series. Highlight is the interaction piece by the four artists. The show runs until April 22. Call 8903988.

Fabie-Gfeller at Boston

YOUNG visual artist Sandra Fabie-Gfeller is presenting her fourth solo show, "Alter Images," Boston Gallery at Quezon City until April 30. Her works focus on portraits and images of acquaintances. "La Primavera," for example, is a painting of musician Jay Cayuca in the vigorous act of playing a Vivaldi on a violin. Call 7229205.

Magno at CCP

THE CULTURAL Center of the Philippines presents "Dala Dalang Dalangin," recent works by Angelo Magno until April 23, at Pasilyo Victorio Edades. Call 8323702.

Aguas, Mahilum and Veloso at Pintô Art

PINTÔ Art Gallery presents solo exhibits by Bart Aguas, Noel Mahilum and Ulysses Veloso. Aguas showcases his recent collection of tile art in "Art on Earth" at the Gallery Shop. Mahilum presents a painting exhibit, "Batu-bato," in Gallery 2. Veloso showcases his series of witty sculptures in "Muse of the Spheres." All exhibits run until May 1. Call 6971015.

Summer workshop

THE CULTURAL Center of the Philippines Visual Art Unit is now accepting enrollees for the CCP Summer Visual Arts Workshop. Courses include Children's Art (5-10 years old) and Mixed Media Art Techniques (16 years old and above). Registration fee is P3,000, excluding materials. Workshop period is April 25-May 25, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 2-5 p.m. (Children's Art); Thursdays and Fridays, 2-5 p.m. (Mixed Media Art Techniques). Call 8323702. Deadline for registration is on April 21.

Group exhibit

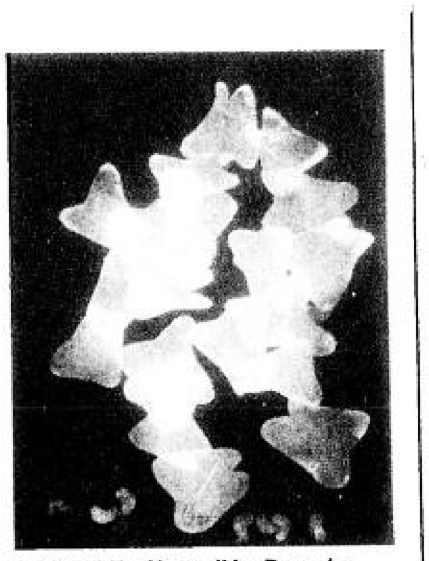
STAIRWAY Gallery is holding an interaction exhibit by Penny Reyes-Velasco (pressed flower), Bobby Castillo (glass), Louie Stuart (paper maker) and Paz Abad Santos (fiber) at the Imacron Media Center Building, 115 Kamuning Road, QC. Exhibit runs until April 30. Call 9201375 or 09209214909.

Cartooning, book illustration workshops

THE LOPEZ Memorial Museum is holding a cartooning workshop for kids aged 6-10 years, for four Saturdays, 2-4 p.m., beginning April 25. Fee is P3,000, inclusive of materials. The facilitator is Joanah Tinio.

The Lopez Museum will also hold a book illustration workshop for college students and/or those who wish to create an appreciation for children's books and learn aspects of its production. The workshop will be facilitated by Ilustrador ng Kabataan members Ouie Badelles, Jason Moss, Pepper Roxas and Liza Flores for five Saturdays beginning April 29, 9 a.m.-12 noon. Workshop fee is P3,000.

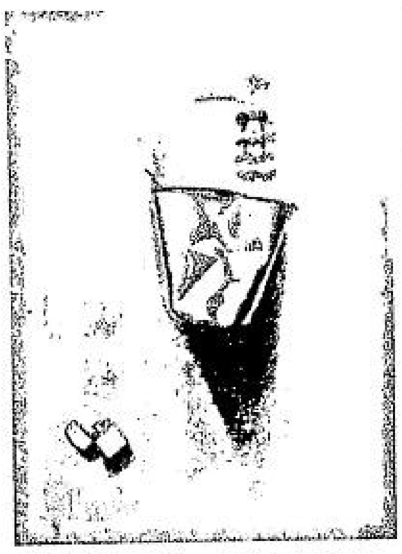
Olazos at new



"STILL Life: Kasuy," by Romulo Olazo

Duemila

GALLERIA Duemila at 210 Loring St, Pasay City, will open "Olazo & Olazo" on April 8 at 3 p.m. The show features still lifes in oil on canvas by Romulo Olazo and abstract works in mixed media on paper by Jonathan Olazo. Call 8319990.

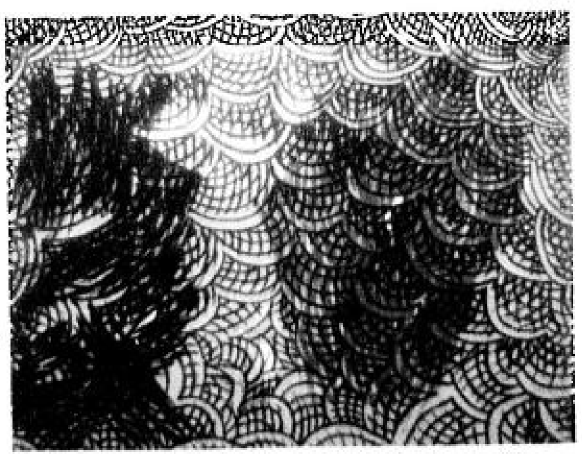


BY REINIER "Bembol" de la Cruz

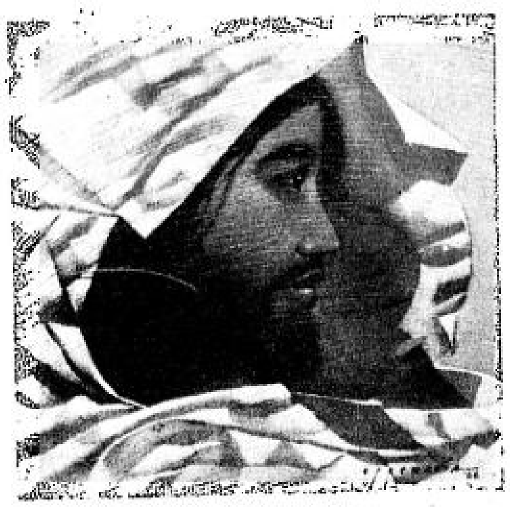
Bembol de la Cruz, Villanueva at Mag:Net

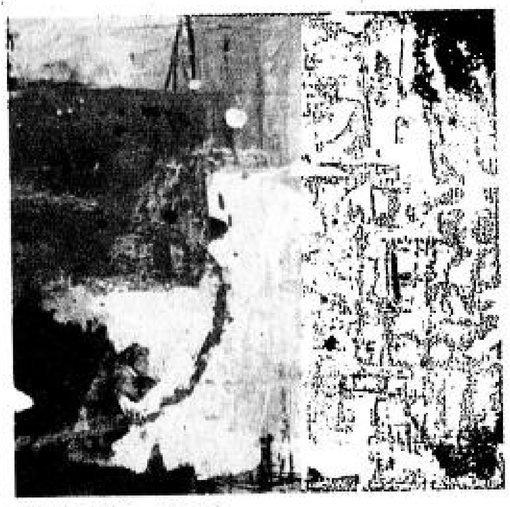
BEMBOL de la Cruz's "The History of Things" opens in Mag:Net Gallery ABS on April 4. The show consists of paintings of various objects realistically rendered on a ground of elastometric sealant fedseal. The same ground was used to cover the same objects accompanying the paintings. The trompe l'oeil rendition has the actuality of the size of the painted objects, emphasizing their objecthood.

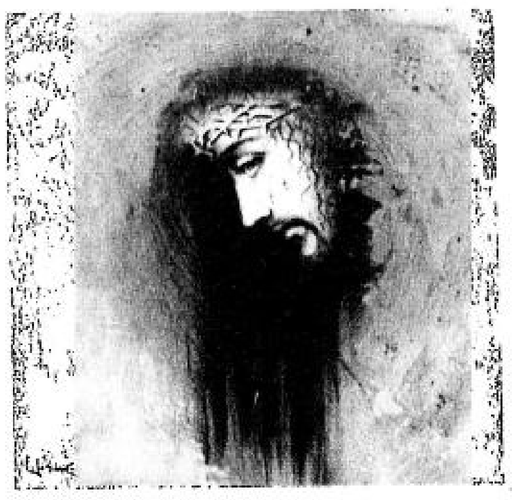
Meanwhile, Cris Villanueva's "Infant Eyes," opening April 6 in Mag:Net Gallery Katipunan, plays on patterns of camouflage. The artist whitens them over, leaving only thin strips, isolating individual shapes, contriving block letters to peek through the design. The concealment is a double negative. Call 9293191.



"THE GREATEST Feeling with My Clothes on," by Cris Villanueva Jr.


"TALUKBONG," by Wilfredo Offemaria


"FAITH," by Lindslee


"IT IS Finished," by Jef Samonte

The Christ in extreme close-up

From page E1

the brutality absorbed by the divine corpus, like a mortician enjoying his pathology. But this is by no means a clinical or scientific attempt at historical veracity. The artist is not so much interested in the science and the history, but, like traditional iconography, in the timeless and devotional importance of the Passion.

The 'Kristo' exhibit commands us to view the Passion and the countenance

Holy visage

Thus, Fil Delacruz's "Ecce Homo" casts the holy visage in a splash of red, the thorns in slivers of gold, the better to emphasize the kingly deportment of Christ's humanity. Jef Samonte's "It Is Finished" shows the divine profile about to expire, the Lenten purple framing the face conjuring terrible grief.

Lydia Velasco's "Behold the Man" casts the face in a wash of green, endowing it with the grace of femininity, thus invoking the universality of the sacrifice. In contrast, Jason Montinola's "The Christ" removes all traces of the sacrifice, save for the crown of thorns, the better to highlight Christ's youth and otherworldliness, His transcendence.

Bin Samonte's "In Him, Through Him" presents Christ at the moment of His crucifixion, when his nailer blunts the nail behind the plank to ensure best his impalement. Since the scene is quite sadistic, there's no need for powerful colors: The canvas is a specter of grays and blacks. Aris Bagtas altogether elides the passion to concentrate on the Resurrection in his "Pagkabuhay," effacing all traces of rough treatment.

The suffering mien also lends well to abstraction, as in Fernando Doctolero's Christ impastoed with colors that are not exactly bloody as much as celebratory (perhaps in anticipation of the triumph of the Resurrection); Julio Austria's painful action painting ("Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus") that approximates in lines and colors the bruises and scars of the bloodied Savior; Anton Balao's snow-white canvas with cuts of black and drips of red that prefigures the blood-splattered episode; Art Bermido's "Scourged" in which Christ's body is remotely suggested by the right-angled figure on the left (like a half-cross) and the punishment it absorbed conjured by the black and bruising slivers of green and red on the right; and Lindslee's gestural bravura in industrial colors, the Christ in metallic passion.

Even Camille de la Rosa's tranquil landscape ("Mount of Olives") is an abstracted vision auguring Christ's agony or even the morning of the Resurrection, when it seems all creation is past the pitch of grief and on the threshold of celebration.

Landscape of grief

Landscapes are not alien to the close-up of the Passion, as some of the artists choose to render the Cross in relation to place and time. Fidel Sarmiento's "Krusipiho" has the crucifix in the foreground set against a dreamlike landscape where one sees vestiges of the country's Hispanic heritage and a mountainscape throbbing with light and promise.

Anthony Fermin's "Resurrection" situates the risen Lord in a blazing backdrop of singing colors. Farley del Rosario's cartoonish "Faith" has the crucified figure connected yoyo-like to the heart of the figure in the foreground, the canvas spread out with the yoyo's (a Pinoy invention), a symbol of relatedness and resilience.

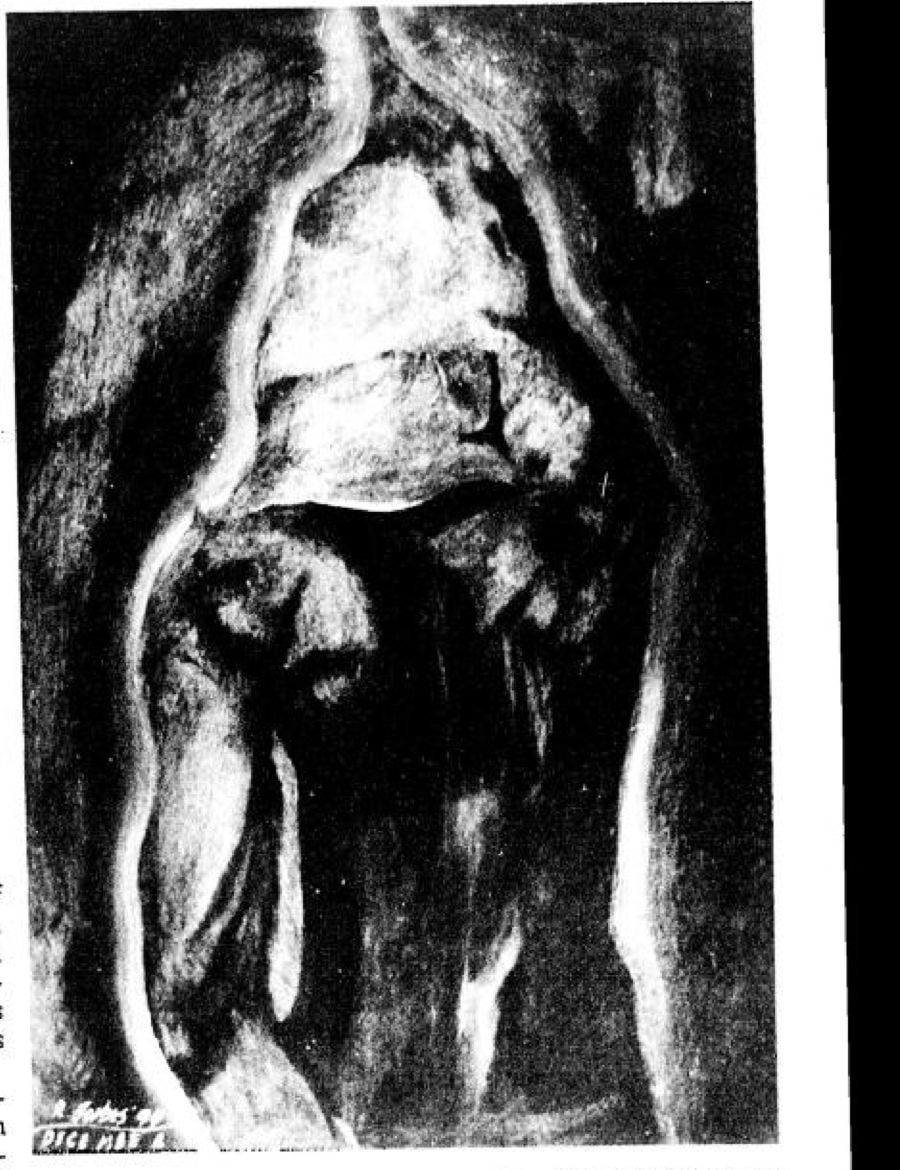
Meanwhile, Bogey Alvarado's powerful depiction has Christ's blood pouring down on sinful humanity, while a boar waits menacingly, perhaps to pounce on everyone who swears allegiance to the faith of the Cross.

Wilfredo Offemaria's "Talukbong" seems to depict the Emmaus episode in which the Christ, under a veil, reveals Himself to Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection.

Pandy Aviado's moving "Veronica's Veil" obscures and tempers Christ's suffering through a woman's gauze, somehow endowing the figure with a maternal care and poignancy.

Meanwhile, Hermes Alegre's "Good Friday" depicts the Christ in a shadowy pallor that seems almost like an abstraction. The work sears the heart with its evocation of the fallen Christ and fallen humanity.

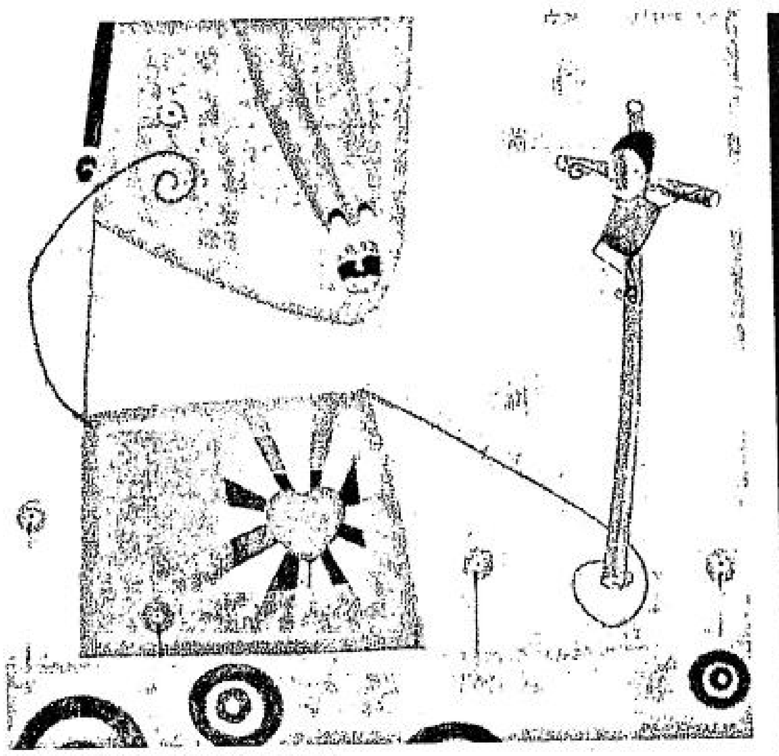
Norman Dreo's "Lamb of God" substitutes the suffering image with the figure of the lamb, symbolizing the meek attitude of the divine holocaust.

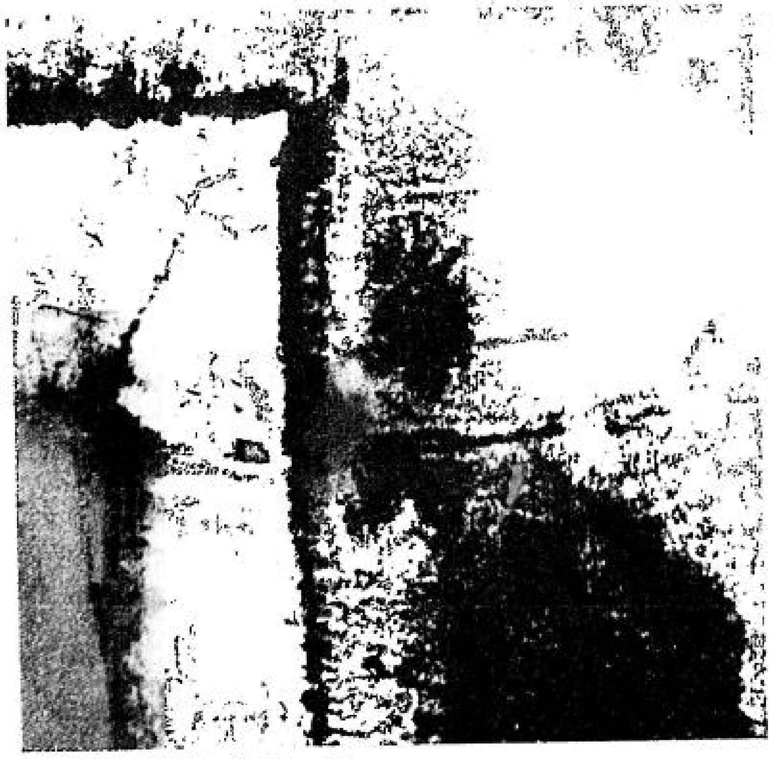

"SA DAKO Paroon," by Romeo Forbes

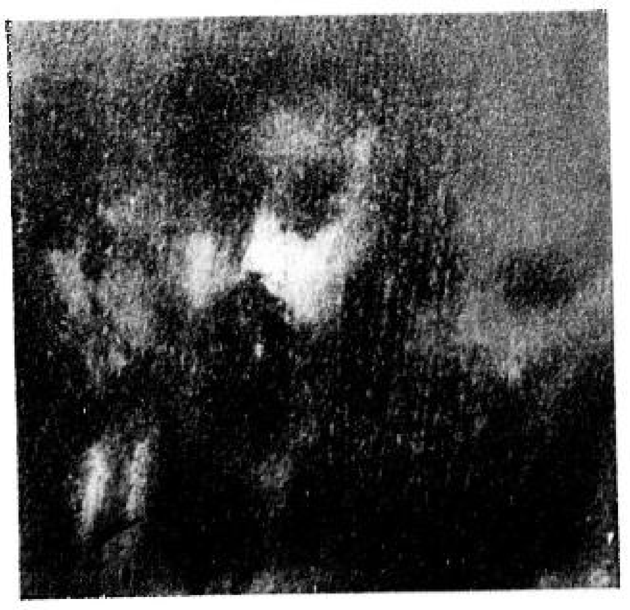
The exhibit this year is doubly meaningful since it is held in memory of the late artist Romeo Forbes, the 25-year-old wunderkind who died of cancer of the blood in February.

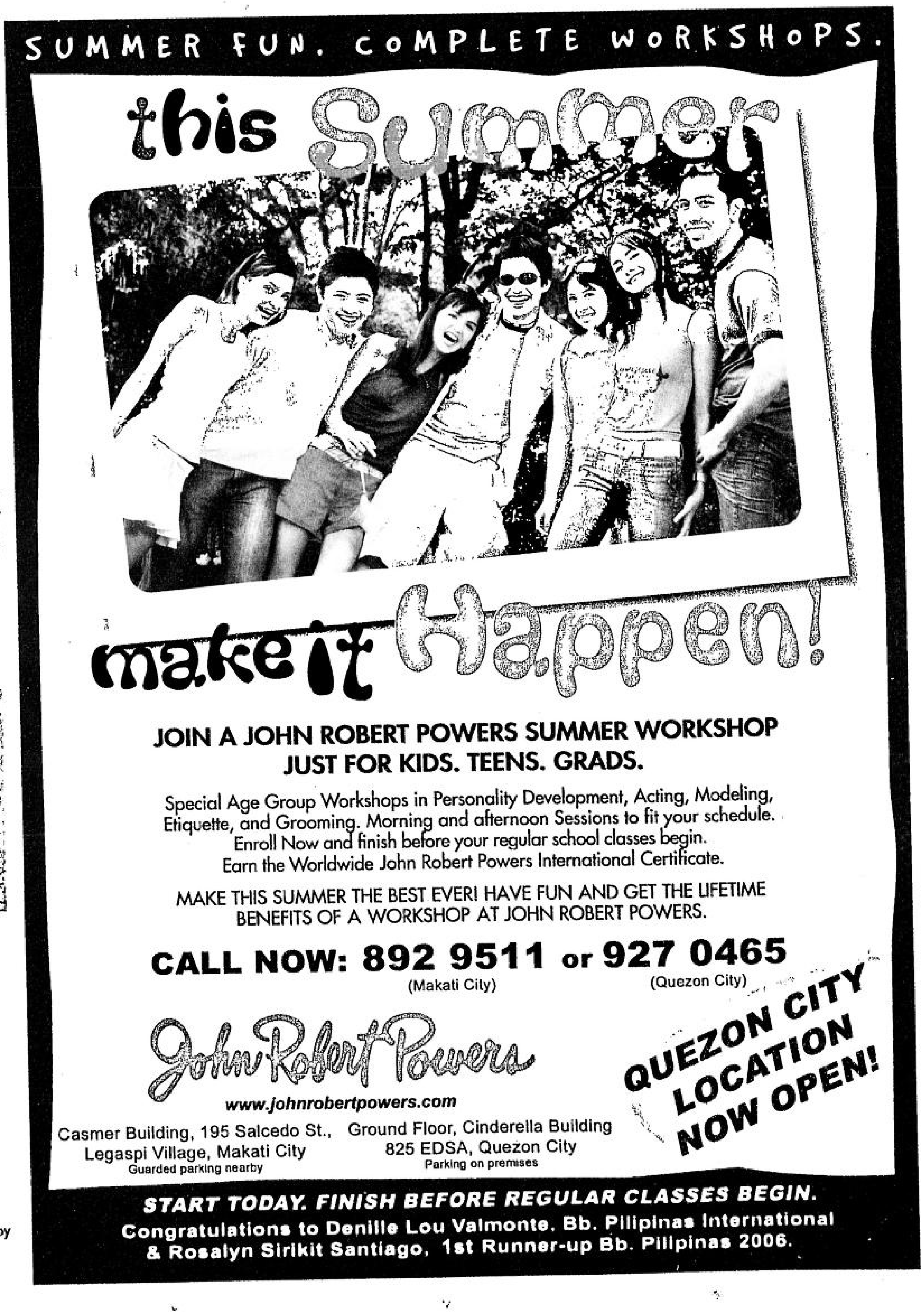
A native of Bulacan, Forbes grew up steeped in the rigor and passion of Lent. In fact, one of his earliest works was "Sa Dako Paroon," an oil and acrylic work in 1999 depicting a masked Lenten flagellant with his back turned to the viewer, ready for the mortification. The striking work will also be exhibited.

"Behold: A Lenten Exhibit in Memory of Romeo Roxas Forbes," organized by The Artery and curated by Jocelyn Tullao of the UST Museum of Arts and Sciences, will open on April 4 in Gallery Nine at SM Megamall and run until the 16th. Call 6867302.


"FAITH," by Farley del Rosario


"SCOURGED," by Art Bermido


"GOOD Friday," by Hermes Alegre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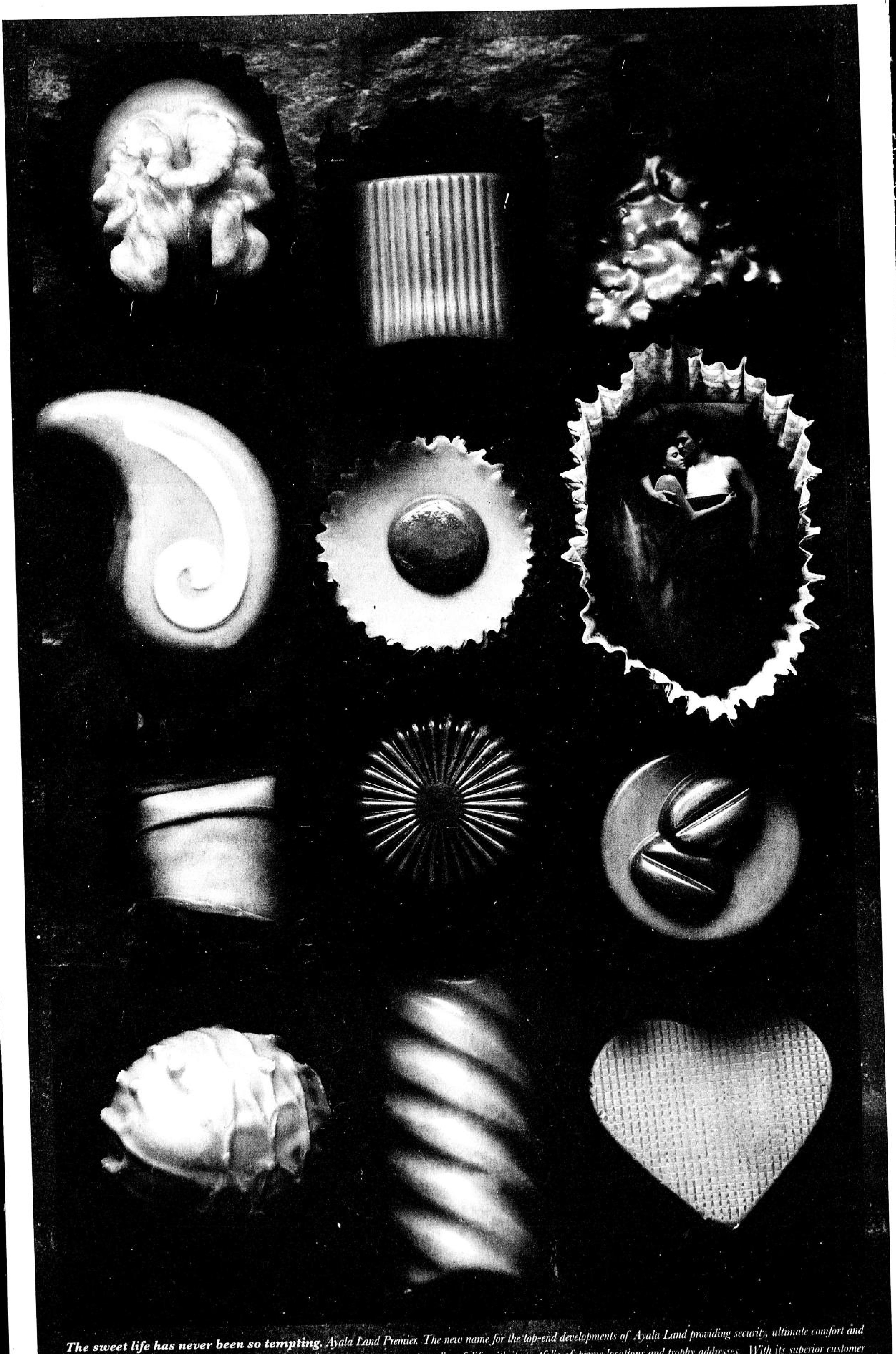

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